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The secret of a quiet mind

THE SECRET OF A QUIET MIND

The SECRET *of a* QUIET MIND

The Building of the Life Within

By

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FOREWORD

THESE studies are the result of several years' instruction of a class in *Religion and Health* in the Church of the Ascension, St. Louis. They are the harvest of a long planting, therefore, and not an experimental sowing.

That they have already helped many in the re-making and strengthening of the spiritual life leads to the hope that they may help a larger circle in a similar way. They emphasise one theme and focus attention upon one need, how to hear more clearly the Voice of God amid the confusion of the time, how to find His Hand and see more clearly the pathway that leads to Him through the fields of obscurity which spread about the soul to-day.

Many are distressed because their outlook toward God seems confused by our overclouded modern sky and crossed with many influences that bewilder, and they long for some word that may clear the spiritual air, making trust more positive and prayer a greater joy.

It is a longing that should deeply touch any teacher of the soul, for many a ship has suffered because of dense fogs at sea, and many a train

has been derailed because of thick mists that obscured the slippery rails, and many a soul has lost joy and faith because spiritual truth and service seemed vague and obscure. May these words help such travellers through life's strange fields and do something to make the going happier and safer for their feet.

No originality of content or treatment is claimed. Help was needed for bewildered minds and suffering folk in a metropolitan parish, and truth and thought were gathered from fields old and beloved, or strange and new.

Acknowledgement is made where sources were known, but many fragments of thoughts and reflected lights, tones and echoes, caught up from the wide ranges and fields of mystic literature, may have escaped identification. He has been most helped by the influence of Ruysbroeck, the Belgian, the *Cloud of Unknowing*, the *Amending of Life* by Richard Rolle, *The Scale of Perfection*, *The Life of St. Theresa* by Mrs. Graham, *Mysticism* by Evelyn Underhill, and *The Meaning and Value of Mysticism* by Mrs. Emma Herman.

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St. Louis.

J. S. B.

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I

THE SECRET OF A QUIET MIND

OUR body is kept alive by heartbeats, but it is the quietness that comes in between that makes possible the next beat and keeps going on and on. The life of the heart is the beat, but the life of the beat is the quietness.

When the doctor tells you there is something wrong with your heart action, it is not really the action of the heart that is at fault but its inaction. It has been beating too much and so overstrain has followed. In a word, this is the whole story of life—all the noise and activity of the world has come out of the deep eternal quietness of God who one day will hush it all into stillness again.

We can become spiritually fatigued as truly as we can become physically weary and we need to bring our souls into renewed contact with those infinite springs of refreshment that are in the life of God and what we call quietness is making an opportunity to use these deeper springs of life.

We are not as important as we think we are. God could make us all much more worth while if we only would. All the noisy, fussy things we do and say, all the prattle and clamour to which we give so much time and strength, does not accom-

plish for God as much as we imagine. It is not at all important that we should just be "doing things" but rather that we should let God do things through us.

What we call quietness is just a way of living. A way of living that keeps this always in view. It is living, not in our small, narrow and selfish way but in God's big way. Having a time to be active with our hands and then being still enough to let God possess us and use us. It is such a view of life as Mary Dixon Thayer puts into her lovely lines:

*"How nice it was of You to be
A little child, dear God,
I love to think my feet are on
The same world that you trod." ¹*

Some people may think that this is doing nothing. That is a great mistake. It is really creative activity. It is no more doing nothing than a sailing vessel is doing nothing with all sails set, every man at his place, every part trim, helm set and steersman tense and silent. All very busy and all of it doing something and reaching port. Quietness is right sailing, not inactivity.

There are two kinds of quietness. The quietness of death and the quietness of life. There is calmness of a certain kind belonging to the cemetery

¹ *A Child on His Knees*, Mary Dixon Thayer (Macmillan Company).

and the death chamber, but it does nothing and creates nothing. Then there is the quietness of life, life that is full, perfect and creative. Much of our life force is lost, much is misspent and wasted because it becomes blind and careless to all need of quietness, quietness that marks the whole of God's life wherever we find it. Noise was made by man, quietness was made by God. Noise and rush and clamour are purely a human product, man makes it and because he seldom sees it as a hindrance and disadvantage, it does much toward undoing him.

Look about you almost anywhere and just notice how God is doing things, how His great workshop of the world is run and then turn to the din and noise in our ears and you will realise that somewhere God is doing big things in a silent way and man is doing very little things in a noisy way. We believe it is practically possible for every friend of God to take over into his human way of doing things some of that quality which all around him marks the way God is conducting His business. We call this "The Secret of Quietness"—and it is. But all of us can have it.

Go out into the country, on one of those lovely nights which are such a blessing at this time of the year, and get away from the clamour and dirt and crowd of the city. Get out of your machine, stop the engine, sit still, look about you and listen. The fields are spread about you in the moonlight,

every square foot of it instinct with action, throbbing with life. Open your ears to the gentle, peaceful, musical sounds all about you. The whole of that field is a vast and busy workshop, but there is no noise about it.

Look at a little child asleep. What a lovely sight it is, the colouring of the beautiful little face, the slight twitching of the drooping lashes, the little movements now and then of arms and feet and the whole of the little body throbbing and beating with life, a marvellous laboratory. All painters have found it hard to paint a sleeping child. They are apt to paint a dead one. For all is so alive and yet so still, so quietly beautiful. It is this living stillness for which we are pleading to-day. For at least one-half of the day God puts His great world to sleep and sinks all life into voiceless quietude. The fowls, birds, insects and the flowers as well. The winds, blowing wild and harsh all day, generally lull themselves into quietness at night and then, when still, God makes it all anew, refreshes, relieves and restores it all. But though quiet, it is not dead, it is really more deeply alive.

All about us is a vast arrangement of God for the conduct of life in the animate and inanimate world, stars and planets and suns immeasurable in magnitude, in the velocity of movement and in their power of radiating light through space. Yet it all moves on so quietly, silently, noiselessly, that we not only casually take it all for granted but

really have only time and interest for our cheap and small human activities.

It makes us feel, when we do study and reflect upon it, that in some way it ought to be possible to take over into the process of things which we do, some of the noiseless ease and unfevered motion that marks all of nature's operations. Overwhelmed with our friction and worry we often look up at the stars and feel the reproach of their quietness. Matthew Arnold touched upon this in his lines:

*"Calm Soul of all things, make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of Thine
Man did not make or mar.*

*The will to neither strive nor cry,
The power to feel with others, give,
Calm, calm me more! Nor let me die
Before I have begun to live."*

Then there is the ebb and flow of the tides. Think of the volume and weight of water and the countless miles of shore-line and the unused wave-power in all that endless lash of the waves. Yet, it is all so quietly done, the pressure upward and downward so gentle.

The human body itself is a marvel of quiet power of the same kind. How mighty the force that for three-score years and ten can sustain the human heart's uninterrupted, ceaseless action. But

no one ever hears it work—softly, quietly the vast laboratory moves onward with its work.

Medical science to-day has done an immense service for human health by reaching out into this universe all about us, into this beautiful system of vital forces and laying hold of some of them for man's benefit. They find that health may be greatly aided not alone by surgery and medicine but by the use of light rays of several kinds, the red ray and violet ray and others. Disordered nerves and afflicted and infected brain and blood and lungs may receive new life. But all that power does its work quietly and all of it environs and surrounds the body like a robe, or bathes it with a stream of quiet, life-giving presence. The patient not only does nothing, and the doctor does nothing, but neither of them must under any circumstances do anything. What a wonderful picture it all is of how God works—viewless, voiceless, noiseless, but mighty.

Richard Holt Hutton ² reminds us in one of his books that three of the most eminent men of the nineteenth century, men whose thought and leadership have affected the whole world of to-day, were all of them to a large extent recluses, they dwelt much in solitude. They were William Wordsworth, Charles Darwin and John Henry Newman, the famous Cardinal. This is notably interesting.

² *Contemporaneous Thoughts and Thinkers*, Macmillan Company.

Wordsworth would return from a long walk in and around the fields that bordered upon his celebrated lakes and then give to the world some of his immortal lines which have glorified all English poetry.

Charles Darwin spent five years in a long and lonely voyage on the *Beagle* and ever afterwards he referred to the influence upon his life and thinking of those quiet and solitary days upon the sea, and afterwards of those other long and quiet observations made upon the plains of Patagonia.

All the world of course knows of the famous Cardinal, and of his love of lonely meditation and how he would mount the pulpit of St. Mary's, Oxford, and give to the world a message that made two continents to listen. It was at a long period of quiet, near the coast of Italy that he wrote his celebrated hymn:

*"Lead, Kindly Light,
Amid the encircling gloom."*

That hymn was born of quietness.

Leadership demands thought and right thinking demands long and quiet reflection. Leadership in American life to-day is greatly in need of men with clear minds, far-sighted, careful in judgment and who have penetrating insight, and such qualifications are impossible unless men have quiet for thought.

But we are not only physical bodies, we are

spiritual bodies as well. There is a wonderfully ordered spiritual life within us that needs nourishment, refreshment and restoration. It is just as true that our spiritual life may be revived and invigorated if we will reach out and use the great spiritual life and presence all about us as it is that the physical life may be remade by this power of relaxing and letting go. Let us learn to give over unto God's hands for a certain time each day our souls and minds and hearts, and do just as the nervous patient does with his light treatment. Learn to let go, learn to believe that real power and life are all about us and we will feel the strength and calmness and uplift that the soul needs.

Our spiritual life seems to be composed of three great faculties, faith and hope and love. But as far as we are able to understand, they are not separate and distinct faculties, but rather one capacity which we call the spiritual life, which reaches out in these three directions or which enable us to make three distinct contacts. Our faith reaches out after God and that is our spirit touching the Infinite Spirit. Our hope is this same Spirit, meeting the discouragements, defeats and sorrows of life, and rising victorious above them. Our love is our spiritual or soul life, reaching out and relating us to our fellow men and moving us to do it beautifully, graciously and helpfully.

But this spiritual life, speaking through faith

and hope and love, becomes weary and worn, grows faint and famished under strain and stress, loses certainty, health and joy and needs refreshment and revival. It can get this by spiritual quietness. If you imagine you cannot do this, that you do not know how or haven't the time, then you will be starved and disabled by an active, but fruitlessly active life.

If we take the time to stop, keep still, be noiseless and in repose for a certain period each day, we will gradually learn the sweet art and gentle science of inward recovery. The great, beautiful power of God's presence all about us will shine upon us, play upon us, enfold us, enter into us and refresh and revive us through and through. It is not so much a method of doing nothing, but rather a well planned inactivity and resolute quietness. Our immediate bodily activity becomes still and the immensely active power of God becomes supreme.

One of the greatest facts in the life of Jesus was the large place which the element of quietness held in it. Turn where you will, in His story, take Him where you find Him and the moment you catch the tone of His voice and note the look in His face, you realise that here speaks and acts One who has just emerged from some place of deep quiet.

"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden"—the reason there is such a depth of strong, sweet helpfulness in these words is that the life

of Him who spoke them was lived far up on high levels of pure quietness and drew continually upon the very springs of the life of God.

We make two suggestions to those who would know and use this great life secret of which the great hurried world of to-day stands in such need:

1. Have a time and place sometime in the day when you will be quiet before God. The morning preferably, of course. Even if you have to get up earlier to do it. Use your prayer table in your room, of which we shall speak later. Make an act of it, be definite and regular. Sit quietly in your chair, or kneel, as you may decide.

Have it out with yourself about the matter of time. It is not time you lack, it is desire. You are not interested, the matter doesn't seem important enough. But if you do not do this, just bear in mind your life will continue to be like a whirling dervish and you will be in motion but make no gain, or progress, and you will lose your peace and joy, and possibly your health.

2. Live lovingly, unselfishly, generously. There is the deep cause of our restless motion—we are so busy about self, so eager to have our way and selfish about our own advancement that all restfulness and calmness are burned out of us by the flame of our sordid motives.

Love refreshes, restores and calms—makes us deliberate and gets results that endure. Selfishness makes us rush and hurry and rudely jostle

people and wears down our nervous reserve. A loving heart always has time, because it has given its time to the need of another heart. Therefore, love is quietness, and quietness is God. "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"

II

HOW TO PRAY

PRAYER is one of the greatest forces in the world, for it opens the human to the Divine and merges our lives with God. It can change weakness into strength, pain into peace, turn darkness into light and overcome mountains of the impossible.

We make a mistake in playing and toying with prayer and too seldom reach those higher slopes of ascent unto God where we see and know and understand, in a large way and as we cannot do when we live in the lowlands of uninspired effort. We must put into it more effort, more aggressiveness. We must think of it as bringing something into existence which did not exist, as creative. We must strive and dare more courageously than we do, if we would accomplish things which seem impossible. We need to know the joy and power of being "Soldiers of prayer." In a word, we must learn to *pray* instead of "saying our prayers," remembering that true prayer calls for the military virtues, courage, daring, and aggressive action.

We think of it as proper and becoming, but rarely think of it as a great world-moving force, mightier than the force that turns the world on its

axis, as something that dares to face our frowning heights of trouble and look ugly and terrible situations in the face, and not only never quail, but be confident and sure. It stands steady and cheerful in the midst of the storm, confident that the white arm of Help will flash forth amid its gloom and noise and inspire us to win through. Real prayer is like that.

There is a hunger for the supernatural to-day, which no one can easily deny, and we will accept almost any definition of supernatural that you may give. Men want, and eagerly yearn for, a voice, a presence, a power beyond all known human help, and feel that they must get it. We realise the things that are contrary, the mad rush for success, the sordid gain of the day and the craze for pleasure. We do not overlook that. But we believe these are evasions, substitutes and imitations of that real help of God, which alone can bring uplift and power.

It is like a child eating sweets when the body cries out for solid food. There is a clamour in the common soul for more than human strength, peace and comfort, a voice, a light, a presence that nothing earthly can supply to save from defeat and lift us from depression and dismay. There is but one way to meet this need and get this help and that is by going straight to God.

But how? That is the question, for there is more than we think to this matter of method and

technique. St. James hints at this when he reminds us that many failures in prayer are due to wrong method. He says, "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss." Therefore, we ask again, how shall we pray? Every one prays differently and yet all pray alike in a certain way. There are as many different kinds of prayer as there are people, and yet through the ages the path that leads to God has been the same. Whenever the human spirit has successfully laid hold of God, it has done it always in substantially the same way. The battle against the world without and against the downward pull of the senses within has been won by heroes of the spirit in very much the same fashion. The great mystics, present and past, have given us this and we wish to simplify what they say, changing a word here and there and changing the order a little, but telling you how they may help us to pray better.

We believe this is needed in our time. We doubt if very much more is going to be accomplished by organised institutional religion. Trying to reach and know God by participating in religious activities merely, has about reached its limit. We think that more and more men are going to seek for the men who can open a pathway for the soul unto God. We need to rebuild and rearrange the interior life within us, for our inward world of heart and soul is in terrible confusion, due to the fierce pressure and pace of modern life. The demands and needs

of modern health alone are a sufficient challenge to better prayer, for in all ages prayer has brought peace to distracted hearts.

Do not be prejudiced against this matter of rearranging the life within. You can do it and it is needed to-day. There is no doubt about it. Do not think of it as something monastic and cloistral. Remember, prayer is approaching God, communion with God, it is speech with Him and He with you. But if you were going to receive some great and worthy visitor, some gracious and good friend, you always think of ordering in a gracious and appropriate way the room where you will receive him. You would dislike to have him come and find the furniture piled in a heap in the middle of the floor. You order things all around you in the best way that will most fittingly aid you in meeting your friend.

So we need to order, arrange things within us, thoughts, attitudes, feelings, placing first things first, so that God may most successfully take possession of your life, as you have desired Him to do. Think of what we are about to suggest, therefore, in this practical way.

Think, therefore, of prayer as an effort to make contact with God and in that sense to make connection with Him and He with you—calling for all that is most active within you. You wish to succeed and greatly long that some of the marvellous results of prayer may be yours that have come to

others, not only in religious history and whose story you have read, but in the circle of your more immediate acquaintance.

You succeed in getting hold of God's help in the same way that you get hold of and secure contact with any human and material thing. The steps by which it is done are in both cases the same. It is useful to remember this, however simple it may seem. Suppose you wish to get a book, a picture, a piece of furniture or anything else, which you desire very much to have, but which just at the present time you are not able to get. Your mind does several things, takes several steps, one after the other, in the process of getting that object whatever it may be. Now the interesting thing is that these same steps are steps we must take, or ought to take, when we wish to commune with, or pray to, God. Consider the human, and it gives you the divine plan, the spiritual order is reflected in this natural order.

You do these things, you give it your attention, you concentrate upon it, you surrender yourself to its message and influence, you supplicate it or bring your needs to it, you make at last a practical resolution as to what you are going to do with the benefit you have gotten from the thing you possess.

We owe this, of course, to our friends the mystics, though their literature is hard reading for many and needs simplifying, and simplifying it is all we are attempting. We venture to drop those

older words of awe, adoration and recollection and substitute our more modern equivalents, attention, concentration and surrender. And in the period we call "surrender," we ask you to place the "silence," without which no prayer is what it should be. Let us look more carefully for a moment at these.

1. *Attention.* First of all, we must give attention unto God, awaken and arouse our whole inward life of thought and feeling, and bid it to stand at attention. It is but the work of an instant, but it should be firm and resolute. Select any attitude you find best, and no doubt varying your prayer from kneeling to sitting will help, but in any case, command yourself to stop, look and listen.

2. *Concentration.* This sustains what has just been begun, it is merely sustained attention. But it will help you to concentrate if you remember that God is at least three things, gives you, or does for you, three things, and dwelling on these in order, helps you to concentrate—God is voice, He is light, He is presence. The voice that guides, teaches and comforts, light that illuminates and the presence that sustains and vitalises and supplies infinite fellowship.

3. *Surrender.* That is, bring your mind, conscience, heart and soul into your work and seek to open unto God, to lift up unto God each of these in succession. Ask God to take care of your mind and take possession of your mind that you

may think aright, of your conscience that it may judge aright, of your heart that it may feel aright to men and things and God. Then surrender to God the soul, the great deep where God abides in a special sense. We cannot tell just what the soul is, but a simple thought about it like this will do. Then the body—we should bring the body, surrender the body unto God, its sickness, pain, disease, weariness and infirmities. Your bodies can be greatly helped and refreshed by following this order of prayer.

4. *Supplication.* Then bring your troubles, sorrows, problems and needs. Pray for others, other people, causes and activities. Remember, however, that supplication is primarily praying for others and not for yourself only. Therefore, in your supplications be sure to remember that it is the equivalent of "intercessions," this is the heart and soul of all supplications. Then pray for yourself last, your problems and sufferings and troubles of all kinds.

All of us should have our Prayer List of various causes and people for whom we pray. Those who are in trouble of any kind ought to be able to depend upon your faithfulness and promptness to render this service of prayer to God. It will accomplish great results.

5. *Resolution.* Form a definite purpose of doing something about your prayer, of putting into practice that for which you have prayed, or the

spirit which has come to you in your prayer. There is always danger of receiving and not serving, of being blessed but not transmitting it to others. Unless we do something definite about blessings which God may have sent us, they may pall and wither upon us like the manna of the Israelites of old when they stored it up for their future selfish uses.

After all of this, we have not said anything about thanksgiving and repentance. But if what we have said of prayer is followed faithfully, you will of necessity put thankfulness and repentance into it. Let us say, these things will come of themselves. No one can be led into this great wonder land of God's of which we have been thinking, with an unmoved and unthankful heart.

No one will get a vision of what it all means and never have any sense of repentance and contrition of heart. For the pure white light of God's presence will reveal to us all defect and fault.

When you come to the work of surrender, bear in mind that this is the place where we ought to ask God to point out to us any sin which we have committed, and to let His light fall upon it so that we might see its dark significance.

III

THE CHARM OF PRAYER

PRAYER is the most interesting thing in the world, or else it is almost nothing. Nothing is as alluring and interesting as a rose new blown and fragrant, and nothing as uninteresting as one that is withered, scentless and dead. Prayer that has lost its spell and charm is a withered rose.

For it is this that prayer seems to be able to do for our lives. It distills a fragrance all through life's noxious air, it soars with wings above the storm and darkness of life's rough surface, it penetrates our jargon and clamour with melody.

Therefore, when people say that prayer has been overcome by distraction and dryness, a feeling that they are speaking into a hollow void and that it seems insipid and tasteless and unreal, we know that charm has been lost.

There is no doubt that these are three of the worst spiritual foes that prayer has to combat, and they should be opposed with all the vigilance and wit that one possesses.

We advise, however, that they be attacked indirectly, for like some other things, they are best overcome by not thinking immediately about them at all. Like sleeplessness and nervousness, they

do not yield to direct assault. While thinking about some other pleasanter things, we fall asleep. When a flower is withered, we do not refresh it by injecting water into the petals, but by moistening the soil—by indirect treatment.

So with this sense of withered interest in prayer, moisten the hard soil of the entire religious life which has become hard and dry. For at bottom what is it due to? It is owing to an immense and thrilling thing which once it is seen will arouse you. It is due to this measureless sea of being and of mystery all about us, this "dark unknown" as the mystics called it, all around mind and spirit and life. In trying to do something and attain something in it, all the mind has for the moment become confused, dismayed and sad. Go after it in a bigger, braver way and you will turn the discouragement of a moment into the victory of a lifetime. Try to put your finger upon the most conspicuous and distinctive thing Jesus did, the one thing which has set Him into our mental world and brought Him to us most intimately and revealingly—it is prayer. He has taught the whole world how to pray.

The usual attitude of His face, the look, the glance, the gaze—it must have borne within it a look that showed He was intensely interested in people, intensely human and yet in it a reflection caught from having looked into the face of God. An echo of eternity in His words, a flash from some

other world. While He was in this life, He seemed just to have emerged from somewhere else. His prayers were marvellous, because all this was so.

Yes, but notice that He succeeded in making prayer interesting, fascinating. How consummately he put the appeal for prayer into story form, little pictures, compressed dramas which have burned their way into the common soul. We no longer try to define the right and wrong kind of prayer. We just recall His picture of the Pharisee and the Publican, and we know perfectly. The revealing little picture of the visitor at midnight and the drowsy sleepers in bed, and again prayer prevails. He bids for interest so deftly by pointing to the beauty of nature, the flowers so frail and dependent and yet cared for so tenderly and then turns swiftly upon us "Much more will your Heavenly Father clothe you." He has pierced the careless heart of the whole world by His great soul-rending prayer cries from the cross, the most memorable of all words. Jesus took prayer and changed it from merely a noble effort and wove about it a witchery and charm, a marvellous fascination at once immense and lofty and alluring and lovely. As Charles Kingsley said,

*"While He wandered here below
Children small to Him did go.
At His feet they knelt and prayed;
On their heads His hands He laid.*

*Came a Spirit on them then
Better than of mighty men—
A Spirit faithful, pure and mild,
A Spirit fit for king and child.*

*O, that Spirit give to me,
Jesus, Lord, where'er I be."*

1. Make prayer interesting—make up your mind to that. See to it that the whole subject is going to be viewed by you as fascinating and compelling. Many little things will help you.

Read what Dr. Grenfell of Labrador has to say about it in *What Jesus Means to Me*. Turn to the story which Chauncey M. Depew gave us of his life shortly before he died. A great business man, with great interests on his hands, immersed in large affairs, yet telling us what the Church had come to mean to him and that he had always believed in prayer and practised it earnestly. He says: "I have absolute faith from repeated trials of the efficiency of prayer. While the answers have not always come by voice or word, yet in some way they have been direct and positive." Many others in our day will change your feeling about it, if you will examine into the story of their life—how it inspired and encouraged them, kept them happy amid many troubles, and gave to some the secret of poise and health and really transfigured them.

Why is electricity interesting to us and all that Mr. Edison has given us, and why is the life of

Michael Pupin one of the most popular books of the day? Why are people so fascinated by wireless and radio and radium? Because these men and these great discoveries have accomplished such wonderful results, changed the very face of life to-day as we live it and at the same time are so human, practical and so much a part of everyday existence. But so would the story of prayer be, its accomplishments just as immense, just as mysterious, romantic and amazing. Look into this, take the time and you will see it clearly.

2. Realise that prayer is *the key to life*. We are apt to run away from life, to think it hopeless, dismal and impossible. We try to draw a sort of curtain over it and then betake ourselves to prayer as men used to run into the Cities of Refuge from their enemies, and as some of the monks used to do in the Middle Ages and in monasteries. Some, but not all, of them.

So this distracted and defeated attitude toward prayer is often due not so much to our wrong method of prayer as it is to a wrong view of life, from which we are trying to escape by the passage-way of prayer. Change your thinking about life and the effort will be felt in the way you pray. For prayer sweeps up into its great embrace so much more than you think.

Think differently about the world and life. It is a beautiful, possible and workable world, God's world, one in which you can well make your way

and be happy and at peace, and accomplish a great many lovely things, provided you see it and live in it as God has told you to do. A life in one of the vast mansions of His arranging, a room in the palace of the king, each day bringing you some fresh view or task or service and in it His voice is heard and in it His presence felt, and all for your use and good, if you will but drop your conceits and let go and listen. A lovely world.

The wonder, beauty and worthwhileness of life, that is the need. Then turn to prayer as your normal and natural outlook and release, which touches existence with reality and lifts dulness to joy.

3. Realise that all *life is surrounded by mystery*—an immense order of living, mysterious forces and powers, and anything can happen; nothing is impossible in a living universe. The mystery of the world is ground for hope and trust.

Radio and wireless show it; the strange play of unknown and unexpected elements in life which we see at every turn shows it; new leaders appearing to-day, never heard of before, and also the singular way things have of going ahead and nothing stopping them. All of these show it. Mysteries everywhere; not so much enigmas that baffle and trouble, but mysterious life.

Let us not be confused and dismayed, let us venture and risk and dare. Things will come out in the end better than we fear. God is in charge, He is right at hand, an Infinite Friend, and of

course you are far more likely to succeed than fail.

If you think and feel like this, you will be certain to show it in the way you go about praying—it will be vital, intense and delightful.

4. Progress is from *within, outward*. Remember that. It has immensely to do with prayer. Attainment of any kind, getting the big things done, depend first on thinking big things and seeing them with the mind's eyes. Every deed, heroism and victory springs from a condition of soul and arises from the uplands of the Spirit. You desire to be something, to make some sort of contribution to life, of succeeding and not failing. Then realise that this outward success depends upon a clear mind and a heart reinforced by God, for courage and tenacity are born that way. Prayer is the ordering of this inward world, the preparation of its tools and instruments. Every great religious leader and most of the world's great secular leaders were men of prayer—Richard Cobden, Gladstone, Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Wilson—look into the story of any of these great, successful men and you will find prayer in a supreme place.

It cleared the air for these men, calmed their minds, steadied their nerves and kindled the fires of inspiration in their hearts. A very successful way to fail is to stop praying.

Think of Charles Wesley, smitten with a sense

of the drab ennui of life, its leaden monotony, its grey dulness, and then he tells us, all in a flash, there came one day a change. External things remained the same, but life itself became transfigured, glorified, and it was prayer that did it. He puts it into one of his wonderful verses in which he says:

*"Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night.
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light,
My chains fell off, my heart was full,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee."*

5. Become alive unto God! That, after all, is the real need. Men have come to think or feel that God is dead and of course prayer becomes uninteresting and vacant and bare. Of course, too, they soon stop it.

Awaken to the fact that He is alive, that He is near, that He cares most tenderly and you will most definitely pray. The trouble really is not with prayer directly but with the way we think and feel about God and life, one of these we think unreal and the other we think disappointing, impossible and cheap—that will either kill prayer or else prayer must kill that. Here's a man discouraged, despairing and depressed. It has put gloom into his speech and no one enjoys talking to him, he is not agreeable company. It has come to affect his health, neither digestion nor heart

action are right and maybe sleep has fled from him.

What does a wise physician do? He doesn't say to him: "You are wrong and you ought to mend your ways, correct your life-habits and you will be better." Scolding never does any good and a wise physician does not scold.

He sends him out into the open, lets him see the charm and glory of the world on a spring day, gets him into the company of cheerful and helpful people, gives him the thrill of a good long walk. In a word, he tries to make the man alive unto life, the life of the great world of God.

When we really become alive unto God, we are certain to take an interest in telling God so, and when we do, that is prayer!

Imagine being in the presence of the living and eternal God, who hath made heaven and earth, and never being touched or moved, never thrilled. Of course we will find prayer will shrivel and its springs of interest dry up if we let God fade out of our lives.

Arouse your whole being, go after what you want and need with your whole life. Do not do it feebly, hesitatingly, but vigorously. And do it with the whole of you. All your soul and mind and strength, and see how soon the face of life changes, how dear and real the presence of God becomes to you and what a joy it is to be able to talk with him "by the way."

IV

THE HIDDENNESS OF GOD

TWO girls, as they walked home one night from work, were engaged in earnest talk. A stranger who stood on the sidewalk near them saw the play of anxious feeling on their faces as they stopped a moment beneath a street-lamp's dim light. Suddenly one was heard to say to the other, "Yes, but why has no one ever seen God?" That was all—just a fragment-word throbbing with pain and regret, and they vanished again in the night.

How like humanity that was! Like children, they pause now and then in the darkness of life, lift their weary faces to the pale lights glaring along the way, and, peering into baffled eyes, cry, "Why can we not see our God?" It was Philip's old question, you remember, "Show us the Father," and all of us are now and then in Philip's class, for it is large.

Must I move on to the end with mystery ahead and uncertainty around, unable to lift even a little corner of life's misty veil, or get the one clear word that would make all plain? Must I be forever doing so much and knowing so little, sure of God to-day and doubting Him to-morrow? Is

Miss Schreiner's legend of *The Hunter* completely true, and must I, like him, follow the vast white bird of truth through the valley of negation and pain, only at last, when withered and old, to catch one little feather from his wings? Is it so? And many, as they ponder it, grow sad and wan and hopeless.

Yet it is a needless sorrow, this regret at not finding the secret of God. This vagueness and uncertainty that men think peculiar to spiritual things is everywhere, not local to religion, but universal in all things. If it does not bother the merchant at trade, why should it trouble the Christian at prayer?

Exact knowledge of anything is impossible. What draws the apple earthward, what is electricity, what is mind or conscience or will, how are soul and body united? We cannot tell; we see these things through a glass darkly. We know some of their uses and operations, but just where they begin, and exactly what they are, we cannot know. "There is enough mystery," said Linnaeus, "in a handful of moss, to give one a lifetime's study."

All our complaining is the old human cry for greater assurance, and its explanation is as various as its cause. In part, it is due to the fact that man is man and God is God, that we are shareholders in two worlds—the visible and earthly and the spiritual and eternal. Destined for a vast future,

and only able as yet to know and possess a very small part, mystery is the result. For mystery, as Dr. Clark says, "is the halfway house between ignorance and knowledge—the twilight of the intellect." It is very good for us on the whole, for it awakens the mind, stirs our imagination, and incites to effort and progress. Yet, good as it is, it disturbs many weak souls, and fills them with Shelley's regret that

*"Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the fair radiance of eternity."*

Even to the Christian sometimes God seems hidden. In spite of the promise that the pure in heart shall see God, nevertheless they often think they do not see Him, and, as far as their own mental peace is concerned, the fancy might as well be fact. But when God seems far off to the Christian, is it not, in fact, because He is so near? He is so blended with man's nature, He so penetrates and fills the chambers of thought, flows through the channels of feeling and rises through all the springs of will, is so thoroughly identified with all man's best and highest life, that, while He seeks His marvellous appearance without, God, as a silent presence, is filling the chambers of the soul.

God was very near to some people in the Bible, and they knew it not. May He not be equally near you, and you be ignorant of that nearness? The young man with Elisha could see no divine

help near, and cried in dismay, "What shall we do?" But where the youth saw nothing, Elisha saw hosts of heavenly chariots, and the young man saw them too, after the seer had prayed and touched his eyes. Perhaps you also need the anointing and revealing touch of prayer. It still works wonders.

The two who walked with the Risen One toward Emmaus, though they looked into His face and heard His voice, did not recognise the Master until later, when He stood in their midst. Perhaps your heart also has burned within you as He has talked with you by the way, and you have mistaken God-given emotions, heaven-sent thoughts, and eternal hopes and longings, for influences purely natural.

To the wicked, God is hidden in a sense different and more awful still. Jesus devoted one whole parable to the illustration of this fact. The prodigal was lost in a far country when he had taken all he could get, followed the wild voices of passion, and spent his all on self-gratification. And selfishness always drives us so far from God that God seems almost non-existent. But when the prodigal awakened to the fact that the highest happiness lies in the service, not of self, but of one who loves us best, then his father drew near him again, and let him feel his tender embrace once more.

*"He who shuts love out, in turn shall be
Shut out of love, and on her threshold lie
Howling in outer darkness."*

When Jacob lay down to sleep that night on the cheerless stones, we may suppose the world never seemed more barren, nor heaven farther away. Yet it was Jacob's crafty sin that worked that blindness and desolation within him. And when God won him over to a better view by the vision of a radiant ladder that linked earth with heaven, he awoke to a better life, and realised that he had been in the presence of God and knew it not.

In many cases God to-day seems hidden, and spiritual realities vaguely unreal because of life's attrition, its wear and tear, its metallic custom and deadening care, the rub of duty and the clash of jangling interests. We do not reject God now-days, we simply let Him alone; and it is not long before a neglected God becomes a God far off, unfeatured and dim, and life's fair visions and dreams of purity fail to nerve and sustain.

*"All day the iron wheels go onward,
Grinding life down from its mark,
And the children's souls which God is calling
sunward
Spin on blindly in the dark."*

Let us not charge God with our infirmity and offence, nor think Him distant and loveless when we are careless and cold. The dust of neglect dims the finest mirror, and the loftiest mountain fails to awe when we turn our backs upon it.

A lonely sentry, pacing his beat along a river bank during the Civil War, sang softly to himself,

"Jesus, Lover of my soul." A sharpshooter across the narrow river saw and heard him. He took aim, and was about to fire, when he heard these words, "Cover my defenceless head with the shadow of thy wing." His rifle dropped, and the sentry lived. Years afterward they met. "When I saw you that night," said the sharpshooter, "singing as you walked, I determined to kill you, but when I heard you cry, 'Cover my defenceless head,' I could as soon have shot my mother."

The Spirit of God that prompted the sentry's hymn unnerved the hand and lowered the rifle of the intended destroyer. God was near that man though he knew it not, and His unseen presence, mightier than a bastion of steel, shielded his life from harm. More wonderful still, He made him wait thirty years before letting him find it out. This should be very precious to our doubting hearts, and silence all hard reproaches that we raise.

V

THE PATHFINDER OF THE TROUBLED

AFFLICTION bewilders us. It stuns the senses, dazes the vision, clouds life's landscape, and we know not how to move. We rise from the ground where we had fallen when the storm has swept by us and the heaving earth is still, to find ourselves in a new and strange country, without chart or path or guide. Familiar as calamity is when viewed in others' lives, when it comes to our own door it seems as if we had never seen it or reckoned with it before.

We need help. Of course we do, but that is putting it too vaguely. Not any kind of help, but help of a very definite sort—such help as the bewildered traveller needs. We feel that we must move onward and do something; stagnation and idleness are terrible, unbearable. Yet this very activity, the one and only thing we desire, seems impossible, for we are confused, paralysed to helplessness. God only can be to us, then, all that we need; and the help that God brings us is not a passive peace merely, not a consolation only, but a path, a road, an outlet to activity, a method of

recuperation. For the God of the troubled is a pathfinding God.

Thus it is that trouble leads us to God by reason of this very bewilderment. Not only is this true, however; the quantity of trouble in life, and its certainty, would also seem sure to bring us under His leadership. Nothing bulks so large as adversity in the world—nothing save the love of God. We weep oftener than we laugh, and sigh oftener than we exult. Nothing else is more certain, more inevitable, unavoidable. Doors may shut some things out, but here is a visitor who occupied your house before you came, and perhaps opened the door at your coming.

Grief sometimes comes on a gigantic scale, in colossal forms that blind and stifle and knock us down. Your mother is burned to death, your father is thrown from a carriage and instantly killed; a boat sinks, carrying a whole family down. What can be said of these horrible things, these tragic days? Nothing that completely explains them,—no full answer can be given. But there is a gleam of encouragement, a strengthening thought that has borne up thousands of brave lives in such times. It is this: the very vastness of such trouble, its magnitude and all-embracing sweep, has brought with it a secret comfort; for nothing so seemingly destructive could have been permitted if it did not have vast uses good and beautiful that we know not of. Of course, "all things work to-

gether for good,"—we do not forget that; and God is love,—love is His method and love is His goal.

But a mere intellectual assent to that truth, and a living, vital consciousness of it, are two different things; and the very magnitude and vastness of affliction flashes into the mind, and beats home to the heart, the sense that it is of God, with a directness that we often fail to perceive in providences of a smaller kind. There is less excuse, one may even say, for a child of God losing God's guiding hand in fields of great disaster than in the little frets and common losses along the way.

God is our pathfinder in still another sense. He guides us, not by shielding us from harm for three-score and ten years, but by unveiling to our eyes the great, wide meaning of life. Trouble freshens our love, makes sensitive our hearts, unseals the fountains of sympathy and pity, and shows us the reality of the invisible world. We are not worth much till we are smitten.

"The inspirations that descend to us from the past," says Martineau in a beautiful passage, "come from the central figures of the great tragedies of humanity. Whatever touches and ennobles us in the lives and in the voices of the past is a divine birth from human doubt and pain."

The broad fact we know well enough, but do we realise the deeper truth that in this softening, refining, beautifying power of affliction, in this deep-

ening of life's perspective and this awakening of our minds to our vast possibilities, is the actual work of a pathfinding God? That is the way He leads. The work of the shepherd is to guide, but the Good Shepherd guides not so much by outward transportation as by inward transformation.

In the loudest storm a cheering voice may somewhere be heard; in the gloom of the thickest night a superhuman face may somewhere be seen. Hope will gleam ahead of us, peace brood within, or the trumpets of courage rouse us from behind. Like the mountain-climbers we will hear One calling to us from the great peaks of life, "Come on, come on; I see the way that is hid from you." Tennyson sings this truth in his "Voice and the Peak."

*"A voice below the voice,
And a height beyond the height!
Our hearing is not hearing,
And our seeing is not sight."*

The pathfinder will not tell us all that he knows; better always that the traveller remain ignorant of some things known to his guide. Nor will he answer all our questions, for a good guide's business is to lead, not talk, and for our own peace he must decline some questions. But He will take the pilgrim safely to the end, and by the best way.

Over the heights of life He is leading us. It is not always pleasant, for the way is long and rough, and the storms are wild; but we must remember

that we are crossing the greatest of all continents and ascending the loftiest of all mountains, the continent and peak of human destiny. Let us not murmur, for we are moving upward. With Whittier let us remember:

*"We older children grope our way
From dark behind to dark before,
And only when our hands we lay,
Dear God, in thine, the night is day,
And there is darkness nevermore."*

VI

RIGHT AND WRONG THINKING ABOUT GOD

LIFE and conduct are the expression of mind and thought. What God will be able to do with His world in our day or in any other day is measured by the way our human minds understand or misunderstand Him.

We know that history tells us an awful tale—tragic and terrible in places—of how the world has been scourged and afflicted in almost every land by men who acted from a wrong conception of what they believed God meant them to do and to be, and therefore from a wrong conception of what is practically right.

Such men have not been lacking in sincerity and earnestness, but they have entertained conceptions of God and ideas of divine truth and life which were erroneous and many times vicious and wicked. You have only to think of the early persecutions of the Christians, and then of the Spanish Inquisition in the Middle Ages, and of course the long and terrible story of the persecutions of the Jews in Europe.

This makes a tremendous impression upon our own life to-day. Many of us feel, for example,

that God is far away, difficult to reach through prayer, that the very suggestion of God seems to bring up before us something that is vague, remote, unworkable and difficult of use, and feeling in that way about it men are apt to be indifferent in their conduct and life, neglecting religion and, in many cases, dropping entirely their Church connection.

But all of this is not due necessarily to men being bad, but to the fact that their minds are uninformed or misinformed as to what God is and what he wants human beings to be.

We believe that if the human mind, therefore, could be rightly affected, strongly and truthfully impressed with the fact of the love and life of God and how necessary he is to our joy, happiness and prosperity, that men would yield to Him and follow Him more largely than they do. In other words, we believe that a great deal of what is apparently religious indifference to-day is due to neglect and defects in the religious education of the average mind.

Let us therefore turn to some of these wrong ideas which men are apt to hold of God and of what God expects us to do, and see if we cannot hold them up for our consideration with sufficient definiteness to move us, to improve and purify our thoughts of God, who is our Maker and Father.

All that we do is to a vast extent the result of our thinking. If we would change outward conditions, we must change inward thoughts. No man

can think straight and live crooked. The life and work of the Church is tremendously affected by the way in which we think of God and Christ, for God is the greatest of all subjects of thought.

Men are made for communion with God. This communion changes life and uplifts and saves the world. But to commune we must think, and think rightly. Thinking wrongly does as much harm as thinking rightly does good. Therefore, we wish to begin at the very beginning and try to change our thought concerning God. It is one of the greatest needs in the Church's life to-day.

Some of us try to avoid this responsibility by substituting kindly and generous activities for it. But if we try "to do good," as we say, and fail to realise the importance of rightly thinking of God, our kindly activities may be almost useless. A great many Church people to-day are making three great mistakes in thinking upon God. That is to say, their mental habit and attitude toward Him, the way their thoughts move out in moments of unconsciousness toward Him, the way in which they feel about Him the moment His name and work are mentioned, all of this inward attitude is marked by three great defects which largely account for failures and disappointments to-day. If these could be corrected, mountains would be removed. Think of some of these for a moment.

1. *The Unreality of God.* Many look upon God as vague, and atmospheric, as far away, out

of touch. He is a kind of theory or point of view to them, not One who is close and near and loving and intimate. He is not One who is as real and near as the ground beneath their feet or the wind that blows against the face. Not a living God unto such people. Because of that they do not believe that they can deal with Him or He with them. They do not establish any personal relationship with Him. It is fatal.

The first thing that one ought to do is to see that this is all wrong, and unnecessary, and that it is a condition of mind and consciousness that can be changed if we will have it so.

It will help us greatly to draw the distinction between "believing in God" and "loving God." By merely believing in Him, we mean thinking of Him as the great First Cause, the Supreme Source, and maker of all. It is hard not to believe in Him in this way, but to love God, we must do more. We must know how to pass over the line that marks Him off as merely existing, as Creator, and see Him as One who is part of our life, the Life of our life. Guiding and leading us, making the light to break about our path here and there even when we are careless and indifferent. We must feel that He is the Force which has gently, firmly and patiently pressed upon our course here and there, making it turn to the left or to the right.

Great crises in our lives have struck and He has met us at the danger point. He has sent peace

and joy amid confusion. Above all, we became interested in Christ, came to love Him and trust Him, and that made us amazingly clear concerning God.

We realise that this same Christ is the source of all that is good, and pure and uplifting in our lives. That all of our hope of living nobly and eternally, has been supplied by Him. We came to realise that Jesus was the real world within and around this world. That He is the Mind within our mind, the Life within our life. In fact, that He is our other being. Thinking earnestly of Christ until we love Him and loving Him until we trust Him, God becomes real.

2. *Two Gods or One?* This habit of having two Gods will ruin us all. We mean that people have a habit of going to Church on Sundays, and worshipping the God of Jesus Christ and then for the other six days of the week, have another God. This other God becomes far more interesting to them than the God of Sunday. It is the God of Self.

The God of Sunday is adored and praised and possibly sincerely so, but during the remainder of the week, He disappears. Such people say to themselves, "I need a new dress, or a new machine. I must purchase theatre tickets or take a trip to Florida in order to keep well, and keep up with things. I do not think I can give anything to the

Church." The reason that they think this is because they have two Gods.

The only hope for such people is to take the God of Sunday and see to it that He moves over and occupies the other six days in the week. One of these Gods or the other is bound to go.

If we undertake to carry this double standard, it breaks. Sometimes terrible tragedies happen. A leading business or professional man tries sincerely to worship God on Sundays, and then please himself the six other days, doing in those days just what he pleases, and thinking that what he likes is right, until some moral collapse occurs and he falls so that he shocks a whole community. Let us have only one God.

3. *Owning God.* Many of us feel that we own God, or we act as though we did. We feel that we have a right to tell Him what he ought to do for us and then when we find that these things do not come, we are disappointed and embittered.

We get into the habit of trying to punish God, take our vengeance by stopping prayers, discontinuing Church attendance and Holy Communion and closing up our Bibles. Little petty penalties and vengeance. Sometimes we say we are all through. All this folly is due to the fact that we feel that we own God. It is a terrible blunder. God owns us.

Of course, it is the old pagan idea. I will do certain things for God provided He does certain

things for me. I will sacrifice to Him, give Him money, with the understanding that He must give me good things in return.

We need to see God as One who owns us, and whose love delights to have us serve Him freely, liberally and entirely. Human beings are constituted in order to serve, by serving we rise to new heights of strength. We are built that way. God rules us not with a grip of iron, but by the soft breath that "bloweth where it listeth," by the gentle touches at the door of conscience, and low whispers to our thought, and by the sweet gift of peace inserted into minds and hearts. Let us all take these defects and correct them. Put a real God in the place of a shadowy and unreal one. Learn to give up our lives all the days of the week to His spirit and ask Him how He would have us live. One God and not two. Then let us realise the joy of living as His children, He owning us, and not we owning Him.

Let people rid themselves of the wrong, empty and useless way in which they think of God and begin to think of Him in Christ. One must turn to Christ to find God. Until we see God in Christ, we will never think rightly of God. Unless we think of Christ as having died to save us from sin and death, we will not see Christ aright.

Make no mistake about it—we must meet the law of cost. Priest and people alike are bound by it. We will win, we will be heard, even as Christ

won and has been heard. Back of what you say must be something of Gethsemane and Calvary. Somewhere there must have been blood. That is to say, you went the limit, you did all you could. Has Church worship and fellowship made us to realise and to share the heartache and heartbreak back of this work?

Whatever we do will depend on what we see and believe. We will *speak* as we *see*.

VII

THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S LOVE

TO know the Love of God and make it central in life is what we are here for. It is the goal of creation, it is the reason why Christ came and it will measure our responsibility at the last. It is hard even to think of a God who is not love and yet very hard to keep certainty central within us and the strain of this effort makes the pathos and peril of life.

Few people can talk of it with reality, interest and charm and yet when occasionally we do meet one who knows and loves the Love of God, the simplest thing he says delights and thrills us. A little boy lay dying in a small English village on one occasion and no one seemed able to comfort him, though he begged that some one might come and speak to him about God. Finally the great Edward Irving, hearing of his condition, came to see him. He entered the room and walking over immediately to his bedside, he laid his hand on his head, in his own simple and wonderful way, and looking down into his face, said: "My boy, God loves you." That was all. But the boy transformed, looked up at Mr. Irving and exclaimed:

"How wonderful it is! But why did no one ever say that to me before?" That is the touch we mean.

The Love of God is a mystery. But by "mystery" we do not mean something occult, unreal or unknowable. In the New Testament sense, mystery meant something that once was hidden which afterwards was made known. But to-day we mean by "mystery" something a little different, a little more elastic, we think something a little wider and richer than this. By "mystery" we mean that which eludes and escapes the careless and casual and which is found and seen by the discerning. A brickbat or a cobblestone is not mystery, but the odor of a jasmine flower at night is quite mysterious. The caw of a crow or the croak of a raven is not mysterious, but the call of a woodthrush in the depths of the dark woods comes to us with lovely mystery. A sign-post has no mystery, but a picture of Turner's is glorified with it. All of life's greatest forces and influences are touched with mystery and all the fruits of the Spirit are mysterious.

A mystery, in our modern sense, is something, as it were, covered with the meshes of a veil, something very real and definite and near, but yet something not boldly and fully expressed. Think of a lady's face covered with a veil, the living face seen through the meshes, yet some features and lineaments of it remain unknown. You are sure of the

reality of the face, but yet not all of the details, and just because you do not see all of these, you are led on and allured.

God's Love comes to us like that. It comes streaming through the meshes of the veil of life, through all of it, the events, thoughts, accidents, difficulties, worship, sacraments and through life itself. We should peer through all that is, all that is seen in order that we may see and learn ever more of this Love. Sometimes we feel like lifting the veil and tearing it away so that we can see and know all quickly. But it cannot be. If God were to lift the veil and flood us with the immediate fulness of a knowledge of Him, it might stagger and blind and overwhelm us. As if we were to grasp the whole power of Niagara Falls before its voltage was reduced. Paul says of this: "We see through a glass darkly," but it is the same thought.

But notice the comfort of this. Look around you during some lovely summer day, note the delicate beauty of the early morning and the subdued tones of twilight as the earth seems quietly to fall asleep. Look at the mist rising above the lake as you visit it for a holiday, and notice the charm of the indefinite opposite shore. Notice the exquisite blue of the eastern mountains, contrasted with the bold ruggedness of the Rockies. Why is all this and what does it all mean? Simply that the charm of everything you see is largely due to the mystery

of atmosphere that hangs like a veil over all and you look through it as through a clear and subdued lens and you are aware of the spell. So there hangs over the Love of God like a vast and subtle veil, the atmosphere of the life that now is.

But what a change comes to us all when we awaken to the fact that we must look through things upon God and that is the purpose of life—it is a veiling that reveals. One of William Watson's most remarkable lines describes the genius of Tennyson under this figure. He says of the great Laureate: "He looked through life and gazed on God."

This Love of God is something that must come to us, it is not *gotten*. You cannot force or coerce or hasten it. It comes and it must be allowed to take its time. Sometimes we feel like rushing onward and speeding it up and quickly becoming more richly conscious of this Love like a man dashing over the country in an airplane on some important business. But airplane methods will not let you into a deeper realisation of the Divine care. You must make ready yourself within, rather than make busy your life without, prepare the room and open a space for His silent coming.

This feeling of assurance of the Love of God comes like some other lovely things, like knowledge, culture, interest in music. It comes like life itself comes. It must be awaited. It comes when you are able to say within: "When I see and realise

the Love of God for me, if I can, when I do, I shall yield my all to love's demands." Quietness and humility within will do more than fussy activity without.

The Love of God calls for courage, and when the sense of it comes, luminous and lifting within, you are sometimes raised to heights of heroism without apparent effort and are borne along like a swimmer striking for the shore and sped onward by the tide that carries him with increased motion.

But it demands and inspires fearlessness and thrills you with a touch of danger, or else it frightens and confuses you, as all calls for courage do. Most men think and feel and live selfishly and securely and for a long time you may seem to be alone because the crowd is living in this poorer way, and doing the fine thing and doing it alone calls for courage. Then too, the whole appearance of life may seem to take from you all semblance of anything like loving direction to life. America to-day is so confused, chaotic and noisy, and it is hard to see anything like the Divine guidance of love. So we must be patient and wait for a greater America to emerge, and this demands courage.

So many things make you feel at times that love does not rule and sway the universe. Trouble, sorrow, impatience, broken hearts and darkened lives and the whole mass of evil all about you are things hard to explain. But your own attitude and outlook are the important things. Do not be so busy

seeking explanations, for, remember that after you have gotten definitions you have not gotten much. There is not much motive power for a dead automobile in turning to the dictionary.

In all your sorrow and trouble, try to remember what we said about the "veil." Try to look through your sorrows and defeats rather than look at them. Try to become sensible of something that God is saying and doing through them, some Voice that is calling to you through them, some Light that is breaking and shimmering at your feet. As Tennyson says, "Well roars the storm to him that hears a deeper Voice above the storm."

Best of all, let us try to live lovingly, and we will gradually become more sure and sensible of love. But if we play with it, speculate about it, argue and debate and say "when you prove to me that God is love, I will take the matter under consideration and later on I may condescend to think of it favourably." It never comes in that way.

Remember, too, that if you do reject it and cast away from you all thought of God as love and lovingly guiding your life, you will grow careless, homeless, lonely, and life will become leaden and existence a terrible problem. There have been many celebrated cases of this, but none more terrible or more graphically portrayed than that of the English scientist, George John Romanes, once a devout believer, but afterwards an agnostic, and his unbelief continued a long time. He says of

this eclipse of his faith: "When at times I think, as think at times I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which once was mine and the lonely mystery of existence as I now find it; at such times I shall ever feel it impossible to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible."

Two suggestions may help you. First of all, try to have an expectant attitude of mind; try to hold a right outlook upon the course of things. The trend and course of things is safe and right and wise for you. Try to see this or else be ready to see it when it comes, even if you do not actually see it now. In the shop, in the office, on the street and in the home from day to day, try to feel and see the pressure and urge of a delicate, kindly and mysterious influence turning things your way. Be expectant.

Then be receptive. Believe that since God is love, that He is active and actively moving in your direction, in your favour. Try to realise that He is hunting for you, seeking you out and you will stand a better chance of being found by love than you will of finding love by some noisy and feverish argument and activity. God does not need your help so much as you need His help in being found of Him.

Do not forget the lovely story of the Lost sheep. The sheep did not search for the shepherd, did not reach and find him. The sheep was found. It had

reached its limits and did not know what to do, could not see nor understand and then it was found. The Love of God knows, presses onward to life's end. It never hurries, nor rushes, never stops or turns back. It persists through all and penetrates all.

Life is being driven forward by two forces, motivated by two influences—getting or giving. You are declining or adopting one of these. Life is made up of both, of course it is both a getting and a giving, they blend and interplay. But in all of us, one or the other of these two forces, these two master words, rises to the surface and guides and rules us. If the supreme thing to you is to get and have and hold things, and if that dominates and colours all else, you will never know the Love of God however you may reason and argue. You will never know it, but will forever be haunted by its refusal.

But if the supreme and paramount thing with you is to give, to share and help and serve and sympathise, then the sense of the Love of God, the beautiful mystery of it will come to you, beating its way through the events of the day and massing its light about your feet, calling to you, cheering you on and filling you with the light of a great hope and you will find yourself wondering strangely how any one can doubt the Love of God.

Love is hindered and limited and halted so often just because it is love. If it were almighty force

it would be so much simpler, but it would be so much less beautiful and satisfying. Love even permits itself to be misunderstood and it can afford to do so, because at the last, the only thing we want to hear is the Voice of Love. It is a mystery, it was once unknown, but now known. It is a mystery seen through a veil, but it never fails.

VIII

GETTING AT ONESELF

YOUR hardest problem is yourself. The most difficult door for you to open is within you. You are your most baffling mystery, the cause of your own defeat, the source of your own unhappiness. You can change it if you wish and if after wishing it you are willing to work at it.

Your unhappiness, ill health and failure in life are due in large measure to your not having gotten hold of yourself, the whole of yourself, mind, body, spirit. Part of it has eluded you—you are letting the body rule itself, you are not paying attention to your soul, you are not opening the mind to God, you are not wrapping all about your united life one vital, beautiful prayer, and moving forward toward the goal God has set.

Therefore, you are sick in body, depressed and unhappy in heart, antagonistic and hard to work with in life, and nobody wants you. Get at yourself. It is worth it. Our class is a place where we do that.

There is a mysterious something in us that keeps us from possessing and commanding our inward world, it seems to flounder along somehow and at times we are astonished at some fine thing we do

and again ashamed at some bad thing we may have done. Why were we able to strike twelve one time and then zero another time.

You are locked out against yourself, and have lost the key. If you could bring together the scattered pieces, if like a good housekeeper you could command the use of all rooms, you would do wonders. But you are just a piece of a life and driftwood maybe at that. Get at yourself.

This is one cause of so much ill health—people get interested in making money and eat wrong food, use bad hours and modes of living, rush about faster than good health can stand and their bodies are not controlled by their reason. Other men totally ignore their souls, they might as well not have one. They need to be aroused to the stern fact that body should be ruled by brain and spirit, and that the bread of the soul is the Presence of God and only God can unite all three and lift all three upward to a higher level of unity and life.

The degree with which one man gets at himself or gets hold of himself marks the extent to which a man can arouse, inspire himself and inspire others and lead a great cause.

Columbus was profoundly sure of himself, deeply convinced, his whole body, soul and mind were aflame on one intense conviction. He discovered America. Such men always find great goals. But also notice—the world discovered Columbus.

Notice a mocking bird singing, on the topmost bough, swaying in the breeze, up where nothing can disturb him. From the tip of his tail to the tip of his beak, he is one united vibrant song. He is *all song*. If you and I could use our bodies, minds and souls like a mocking bird sings, we would be well, happy, useful! Watch a great pitcher at his work in a ball game. All his fine athletic strength, all his nerve and skill, all his keen wit, steady as a steel beam, and all of it gathered up and united back of the ball as he drives it over the plate. If we used our bodies, souls and minds as a great pitcher uses himself, we would do wonders.

But each of us can accomplish a great deal by trying to get at ourselves and when you do, you get hold of yourself.

You will get at yourself by going to God in quiet prayer. God has control of a large and glorious part of you, your soul, in fact your soul's life is God's life. If you get at yourself successfully, you must go to God, find Him, and ask Him to help you get hold of the whole of yourself. That will solve your problem, unlock the door, make you happy and add immensely to your usefulness and charm.

But make an act of this, form a little plan, don't just dream and muse about it. We will speak in a moment about some particulars in this plan, but just here become aroused to the fact that getting

hold of oneself is the most valuable thing in the world to a man, for it is the Key to his health and happiness. If it is truly interesting, you will persist in it.

Then how wonderful to realise that getting hold of oneself is just giving oneself to God. When you surrender all to Him, He puts you in command of yourself, you are in control, because He is in control, you will be happy, you will be well, you will be able to lead, help, serve!

Have some place where you can go and be quiet before God. When before Him, sitting in your chair, or kneeling, your situation is like this—you are not in good health, perhaps you may have some serious trouble. You are distressed, unhappy, and bitter, life has gone hard with you, you are resentful. You are not getting along well in life, living has been difficult, you feel at times almost like giving up the game.

Now your mistake thus far has been this—you have carried this load yourself, you have delved and bored into your personal backgrounds until you are wild, you have burned out your engine by useless friction. Now and then, feebly, faintly, you have asked God to help. There is your blunder.

We suggest, instead of carrying all this yourself and asking God to help you, make up your mind you are going to ask God to carry all of it for you and then are going to ask Him to let you help Him,

instead of His helping you. That's the difference and it's a big difference. It will relieve you, release you, set you free within, you will feel like a bird out of a cage and you will feel the difference in your health, because you will stop worrying and be at peace. Talk to God, something like this.

O God, I now give over into Your hands my sickness, my happiness, my usefulness, my life. I have given to You my business complications. You understand all about it and are now working it all out for me.

My body is Yours, You made it and You can remake it, so that it will be well. I am not going to worry about it any more.

I shall now work with You by thinking right about it and not work against You by thinking wrong.

Very soon a flood of light will break on my whole case, and I shall see it all clearly.

Pray in this way, think in this way, and you will pray and think creatively. When you do this you will "shift your gear" within and bring about one of the most profound changes in your deeper life that can possibly take place.

This is not a trick of words, it is not a fanciful phrase, but a fact and the recognition and use of it does two things with our whole interior world. It sets to right something that hitherto we have wrongly conceived and used and then it puts God into a place of supremacy within you, together with all the consequences for good which that

brings about. Practically just what we mean is this,—if it is a fact, and it can hardly be denied, that the whole of your life, in all of its aspects, is a unity, and if the central Fact of your life is God, then for you to ignore, misuse or trifle with the fine mechanism of that unity and for you to ignore the fact of God is folly and blunder of the worst kind. What we are suggesting to you, and it will mean your health, your happiness, your usefulness among your fellowmen, is this which we have just mentioned.

Remember then that God's Presence and Strength comes first, because it is first and must be thought of first of all by you, and the more definite and positive you make sure of this within, the better the results will be in outward life. For instance, this vital Contact with Him should be thought of before you think of your doctor, your nurse, or your bottle of medicine, although all of these things are quite important, and in order that you may make sure of it, we must advise you to use some very definite checking-up process on yourself, in order to avoid self-deception—you must see it, think it and say it. If you use the above little meditation and short prayer, it will greatly help you to realise this.

You must do all in your power to try to become really interested in prayer. You must arouse yourself and try to realise keenly that God is deeply interested in the solution of your problem, and

that He is now actively at work on some answer, some victory, some result which you will soon come within the reach of. Try to become interested in all that circle of thought. Naturally, we are not interested, for faith and prayer, naturally speaking, are quite uninteresting to people, quite unattractive, and do not seem to bear upon their face the stamp of real importance. We repeat, therefore, that you use every means within your power to become interested deeply in prayer. We suggest the following plan as a daily practice:

1. Make a definite act of your purpose "to get at yourself." Unless you make an act of it, that is, have a time, place and method, it may all fly away as a pleasing thought.

2. We suggest again that you use a prayer table, some little table in a quiet room to which you may go. This table should have on it a cross, if you can conveniently arrange that, and then your Bible and other books of devotion, but nothing else. This table and what is on it will help you to think, help you to get at yourself, it will remind you of God, of your need, weakness and dependence upon Him. Life is greatly changed by moving from the outward to the inward, and so this little table will help you in that way.

3. Do this in the morning, even if you have to get up a little earlier, in order to accomplish it. Do not weary yourself by trying to do too much at

one time, and possibly fifteen or twenty minutes will be enough to begin with.

4. Use a simple form of meditation. We mean this, turn to the Twenty-third Psalm, the Ninetieth and Ninety-first Psalm, or to any of the passages of the Sermon on the Mount, and take just a verse at a time and try to think about it.

Use this not as somebody else may use it, but as you only can use it, as a help by which you can lift your thoughts to God.

5. When you have reached this point and brought yourself into stillness and have used the method of sitting in your chair or of kneeling, close your eyes and endeavor to lift thought and heart unto God.

At first you will feel that this is awkward. But persist. It is worth it. For remember that if you are to change your inward life, you must learn this little habit of raising the attention to God, then realising that attention makes for interest, and that out of interest is born desire.

These are the three mightiest weapons for altering one's life—attention, interest, desire.

We offer these little hints:

Turn the attention to God and ask Him to help you. He will.

Rest in the thought of Him, linger with it for a moment. You will learn this better as you go on.

Ask Him to help you to give to Him your mind and heart and body.

Be silent, but not for long, just for a few moments—let go, relax.

Try to do this sincerely, though simply. Do it day after day, you will greatly increase in your ability to do it.

Remember what we told you about the power of attention, interest and desire. You cannot look at anything without becoming mentally interested in it. If you sustain your interest, you will stir the depths of desire, that is to say, you will either like it or dislike it, and in either case the world of desire is stirred. Try this out—look at a picture. You give it your attention, you become interested in the story, you find yourself liking it so well that you would like to get a copy of it or you tell your friend about it. In a word, the picture has caught you, seized you, inspired you. We mean just that.

Remember that what is called creative desire is perhaps the most powerful thing in our inward experience. If you can succeed in letting this creative desire penetrate as deeply into you as your trouble is seated or as your sickness may be located, it is certain to prove a powerful counter-active and restoring force, a creative force.

This is all of it God's work and yet all of it is your work. It is a combination of thought and prayer and quietness.

We wish to assure you of this, that if you will earnestly, intelligently persist in this, it will graciously bless your health, re-encourage your heart, and make life definite and happy and useful.

IX

THE ART OF LETTING GO

WE must let go before we take hold. Progress in any direction demands that in some sense we quit the place where we are. If we put one foot forward, we must lift one foot from the ground. If we wish to take a book in our hand, we must first let go the book already in that hand. Before taking hold of anything new, we must first let go something old.

The mind is a sort of hand or pair of arms for taking hold of things, although the things of which it does take hold are invisible realities. The mind is that instrument within us with which we take hold of truths, ideas, plans, resolutions, convictions, and the same rule applies, we must let go if we would move forward.

The particular faculty of the mind with which it takes hold is called "attention." The mind with its "attention" is the wonderful hand that brings both material food to the body, and spiritual food to character, and it is a wonderful thing to consider.

But the soul is the greatest capacity of all, for by it we lay hold of God. The soul should be as keen and eager to gather fresh food, disclosures,

warnings, encouragements, inspirations from God as the mind and the body are in their respective activities. But the soul must let go if it would grow, if it would be uplifted, comforted and strengthened. Too many souls are just where they were years ago, because they have never let go.

All day long the mind and soul are enmeshed in countless relations and contacts, truths and errors, virtues and vices, the din of the market, the folly and fury of the streets through which we pass, and it becomes soiled, jarred, shocked, fevered, often exalted and often sinking to despair. In short, what happens to hands and body also happens to the soul; it becomes soiled, worn and disfigured and needs cleansing and renewing, and to do this the soul must have to "let go" what it is doing, what it holds and open itself, uplift itself unto the source of its Life, which is God. But it cannot do so unless it learns to "let go."

We recall the experience of a book agent. He was given his sample books, instructed as to the art of salesmanship and, in fact, was given a specimen interview, which he proceeded to commit to memory. He started out and worked hard, tried to recall literally and particularly everything that was told him, and in the way in which it was told him. But he never made any sales.

Then, taking a hint from a friend, he "let go," or let us say, "he let himself go." He studied how he might be himself, the best self, and how he

could interest people, and in order to do so, became so interested in people that he forgot all about himself. They found him so delightful that they of course bought his books. But it was because he "let go" of the letter that killeth in order that he might take hold of the spirit that giveth life.

Sir Robertson Nicol once said, "We are all so busy doing so many things that we do nothing."

A woman was saved from drowning a short while ago, off the harbor of Hamilton, Bermuda. Together with some others, she had left her vessel and gone ashore sight-seeing, and while on land a storm arose and the ship's whistle blew, calling all back. The tender was late leaving the dock, night had fallen before they could get started, and the winds were blowing wildly. In the stormy passage to the ship, she was blown from the deck of the little vessel, and for some time was sought in vain. She said afterwards that she recognised at once that she could not swim, but recalled that an instructor had taught her how to float, as all novices in swimming are taught. She immediately turned over on her back and "let herself go," and floated around until the search-light picked her up and a life-boat rescued her. She was saved because she "let go."

It is interesting to notice how Jesus dealt with this matter and let the light of His beautiful interpretation play upon it. There were two lovely

friends by the name of Martha and Mary, both dear and well known to Him. One of them was always intense, ceaseless and strenuous. The other, we may well believe, was also quite as devoted to the well-being of a good home, took quite as much pride in having things right about the house, but going about it in a different way. Jesus praised Mary as having "that good part," and we may perhaps believe that while eager and active, yet above all else she needed contact with Him, and to stand hushed before His Presence. She too learned the art of letting go certain things in order that she might take hold of God.

Notice how He spoke to frightened disciples in the storm on Galilee. They were labouring frantically to save their little vessel and themselves, exhausting every resource and it seemed to them of no avail. There is no doubt that they were intensely active. But when Jesus was awakened, He turned calmly to them and said reproachfully, "Why are ye fearful," and rebuked the sea and there was a great calm. In other words, He appealed to them to "let go."

Jesus saves in this way, He asks us to "let go of ourselves" and take hold of God. And we cannot take hold of God until we do let go of ourselves.

Jesus Himself seems to have done something like this. As we follow Him we seem to see Him trying to draw men after Him by intense and direct appeal and get them to listen to Him and follow Him.

But they resisted Him and at last sought to destroy Him. Then we see Him apparently let them have their way. His blessed hands He let them nail to the bitter cross. He let them scourge Him, let them crown Him with thorns, let them robe Him in terrible mockery, let them rail upon Him and crucify Him. All through we see Him surrendering to them, giving Himself over into their hands. He "let go." But in fact we know it was not surrender merely, but really it was victory.

Prayer succeeds or fails as we come to realise that it is not only request and petition, but contact. It is only in a small way petition, and it is in the deeper sense the right ordering of our whole world of mind and soul, so that God can come to us. But before God's Presence can enter us, we must vacate our minds and hearts of other preoccupations, so that He can enter us.

Try to "let go" in just this sense, when you find yourself sick and suffering. When sickness does come, we know that pain may fill the body and take such possession of us that we can scarcely think of anything else. Sit down quietly and try to face it. Say to yourself something like this: "I know that sickness is in my body, but there is no sickness in my mind and soul. Therefore, the larger part of me is free from pain. I shall try to let my mind go. Pain is a reality, but I shall try to shake myself free from the acquiescent and surrendered attitude toward my problem and raise

my thoughts above it, hopefully and confidently. I shall 'let go' and ask God to 'take hold.' " This is a tremendous gain, for all physicians depend upon the confident, hopeful and living action of the real man in the inside of you as the basis for anything else they may do.

This is the deeper meaning in that sun-burst of comfort which we hear in Jesus' invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." For it means that a higher life has come to enrich and enlarge your lower and smaller life, and that a higher hand has been reached out to grasp your weaker hand.

But faith and prayer are always a venture and a risk. We never can see all the points in the case, many things will ever remain hidden and unknown, so that there comes the place, the moment when we must launch out, make the plunge, put a leap into it and dare.

Many little things along the path of every faith venture we must do and ought to do, of course, but the only reason that we can do them is that all about us are influences, forces, laws we call them, upon which we can rely, and when we do we find that they will bring us great results. But when we speak of relying upon this unknown quantity, depending upon what we call laws that are working for our good, when we act remembering that the universe is on our side, we can do it only as we become willing to "let go."

Here are our lives, with all their capacities, faculties and powers, and their countless contacts with life and men. We become so much pre-occupied with their immediate and intensive action, so absorbed with the sense of the importance of our own plans and what we are and should do, that we often forget everything else and become blind to realities that can lead us to deliverance and victory.

We need to realise that God is alive and life dependable and people to be trusted and that life is not horrible, but that all about us are saving, helpful, beautiful forces and influences which, like a great tide, can lift us up and carry us with a mighty swing to the shore. But if we would use it and get its blessing, we must first "let ourselves go."

X

HOW TO CLEAR THE MIND

(A suggestion to those who are recovering from sickness, or who have passed through some great trouble and need peace, or who may be facing a disturbing problem, or who have suffered some bitter disappointment.)

YOUR hands cannot grasp any worthy and useful thing as long as you hold within them wrong and useless things. You cannot have a beautiful room occupied by a worthy guest, unless things which litter it up and confuse it are removed. All through our lives, we are constantly face to face with the need of cleansing and clearing up, of throwing things out that are useless and confusing.

Our mind is like that. It is a tremendous instrument with which we grasp and hold things. It is a marvellous and beautiful room that is capable of being filled with wonderful presences, but it needs to be cleansed of its trivial, broken and confused ideas, impressions and attitudes.

The tragedies and calamities of life, the very impact the mind makes upon the problems of daily experience, are apt to fill it almost as an attic room is filled with broken pieces of furniture. We must learn to cleanse the mind and there are simple ways

in which it can be done, and health and peace and growth in the knowledge of God demand it.

There are certain definite things we can do when emerging out of the experience of sickness, struggling to get well, or when faced by a trying situation, or trouble. We will find that it will greatly help toward permanent victory if we try to clear the mind of its mysterious fears, inertia, oppositions and prejudices and lack of unity and control.

The mind now and then *needs waking up*, completely aroused and cleared out. If you have had some bitter experience or disappointment in friendship or purpose of any kind, or if you have had some physical accident or sickness of short or long standing, something shocking, painful, trying, which certainly has cost you your peace of mind, if it has not endangered your life, then it is that your mind may be full of the effects of these shocks and impacts just as a room may be full of a chaotic pile of furniture, or just as a city may be littered up in the wake of a tornado that has passed through.

It is this that we have in mind when we make the following suggestions:

1. It will greatly help in the unifying and cleansing of the mind if we learn the secret of "adoration." It will overcome distraction and make for unity, stimulate slackened interest and overcome dryness in prayer. By adoration we mean trying to cultivate that outlook and attitude

toward God, which dwells upon His wonder and majesty and silence and mystery and beauty. Many of the Psalms are rich in this, as for instance the Ninetieth and Ninety-first especially.

If we seek to open and set our minds toward this, place ourselves in an attitude of being "sensitised" and receptive, it will arouse and broaden and enlarge us.

2. Then cultivate the attitude of surrender unto God; that is, of gently, urgently giving over into God's hands any situation you may have, or proposition, issue or difficulty. If you keep your hold upon these things, if you cover them up within yourself and repress them, then you become confused and troubled. We do not say "give up" or "give in," but "give over" into God's hands.

When we "give up" or "give in," we surrender in the sense of "quitting," but when we "give over" the problems that have exceeded our knowledge and capacity and place them in God's hands, then we do a very active and not a passive thing, and place a High Power in control of something which is defeating us.

3. Then cultivate the sense of openness toward God. By openness we mean *desire intensified*. Note then—you open the mind when you give attention to an object, you open the heart by desiring a certain thing, you open the soul by surrendering to God. We can open our hearts and souls by de-

sire just as we open our eyes in the morning when we want to see the daylight, and just as we raise the curtain when we want to look out of the window. It is "desire" that will always open, and desiring God opens the heart to God.

4. Also, cultivate "soul capacity" by the exercise of the sense of wonder. We suggest that you try to think quietly of almost every wonderful thing that you see—for instance, sunrise and its mystery, the strange silence of the night, the quietness of the mind's mysterious working, the rhythm of our life pulsing within, the strange passing of time, the wonder of children's love and the beauty of peace and purity and unselfishness. Let the wonder of all this be dwelt upon in a quiet way by the mind.

5. Try out these tests upon yourself. We note each of these in its order because they are like so much debris that must be cast out. The moment that you touch them and name them, they seem to disappear.

"Regrets"—think of the things that you find yourself regretting. Something of which you are guilty and which is justifiable, then ask God to forgive you. Place it in His hands, but do not continue to regret, that is, do not keep on regretting, for if you do, it becomes a source of worry, burns and disturbs you. Each of these creates within you what Miss Underhill calls "a little whirlpool of disturbing and distracting influence."

“Forebodings” or “anxieties”—what is it that you are most anxious about? Most of your dark forebodings as to the future are needless. Try to learn to live a day at a time and leave the future to God. Learn the art of drawing a little curtain over the future.

“Fighting with the mind”—by this we mean, fighting and rebelling and combating a situation in which we may be, by pummelling with our thoughts. Do not fight with the mind in this way, but learn to give over a matter or problem into God’s hands and ask Him to work for you, fight for you, and He will.

“Pride”—many of our mental hurts and disturbances and depressions are due to antagonisms and frictions we have had owing to our pride. You have been put in an unpleasant position or in an unfair light and it has hurt you. Most people who carry about hurt feelings are egotists.

We ought to cultivate “transparency” before God. When we are transparent, we become humble and marvellously protected against these antagonisms.

“Hate, dislike, antagonisms”—look out for these attitudes. Examine and see if you have any. If you just realise that you are not only carrying some expensive luxuries and useless baggage, but that all hate and dislikes are ruining your inward unity, confusing your harmony. They are just so many “poison spots.” Many a man’s health has

been broken down through hate and forgiveness has started him on the way to a restored health. Hate and antagonisms do not hurt the other man but harm you.

6. "Oppositions," that is to say, people who have worked against you or opposed you in some one of life's countless connections, and such opposition has made you disappointed, fearful or angry. Either convince yourself that you are going to be a servant of these people, help them and change them, or else commit yourself to God's keeping and protection. When you do that, disquietude disappears.

7. Now try to look at this as a whole. Try to take these negative and disturbing, distracting, disordered ideas of mind before God. Such a negative condition of mind is created by the above conditions which we have described. Therefore, when you find yourself in such a condition, take this attitude of mind to God and ask Him to clear it, cleanse it and order it aright.

8. This "bad-mindedness" is really what Paul meant by the "mind of the flesh," or the "carnal mind." If we would seek to have the mind of Christ, we must understand what the mind of the flesh is. That is why the above injuries which the mind receives are well for us to canvass and understand. When we do understand this, let us take it to God so that He may put into us the quiet, happy and victorious mind of Christ.

XI

GETTING AND KEEPING THE MIND OF CHRIST

LET us turn now from the work of clearing the mind of injurious and vitiating impressions received in the almost endless contacts of the day, to the more wonderful and beautiful work of getting and keeping the mind of Christ.

Remember that to have the mind of Christ is to be a Christian. The phrase is St. Paul's, but the truth is Christ's. He came to redeem and save men by getting possession of their minds and no man is saved beyond the degree in which his mind has become possessed by Christ, for the man always is as his mind is, and as a man thinketh so is he. It is mind that marks off man from the mere animal, and nothing below man has mind. Beginnings and rudiments of mind may be there, but not mind.

This, too, shows us the difficulty and wonder of Christianity, and accounts for its slow progress through the years, and why many people even to-day often think it is vague and indefinite, hard to understand what its vital and central meaning is, and failing to realise it, put some imitation or sub-

stitute for it. It is hard to put it into one sweeping statement, because it is God's effort to get hold of man by getting hold of his mind—pursuing it, besieging it, besetting it behind and before, enclosing it like light does the body as you walk out into the sun, and as the body encloses the physical life. He appeals to our mind, penetrates it with ideas and hopes and stirrings and movements that defy description. All this is hard to state in a few words and many grow weary of it and despair and turn away.

It is really true, as some one once said, that Christianity is not a religion at all in the sense that Buddhism is a religion, that is, it is not a philosophy or system of thought.

One of the marvellous things about Jesus was the way He seems to have gone about trying to get possession of people's minds. How He invaded them with shafts of light, colouring and impressing and vitalising them. We believe one reason He healed so many people of blindness—and there must have been multitudes helped of whom we have no record—was due to His deep desire to enlighten and open the eyes of the mind, of which process bodily healing was only a part.

You can feel Him as He goes about this work—"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?", He says to Peter, on the shores of Galilee, after the Resurrection. Then to the group of Apostles, "Whom do men say that I am?" or again when He began talk-

ing to the woman at the well, "Give me to drink." Always, or at least very frequently, it is in the form of a question, pushing open the door of the mind and entering the chambers of thought. So indeed God is still doing just that, inserting Himself into our reflections and musings, so delicately, so sensitively.

He did not build institutions, enact legislation, make codes and write systems of thought. He sought men with the fingers of thought, He laid upon them the hand of an idea, he besieged them, beset them with truths, ideals, hopes and affections. Slowly, very slowly, has it worked its way and the masses of humanity since have not been lifted up to His level yet, but progress has been realised, a beginning has been made, and to-day the mind of the civilised world shows the tremendous impression which the mind of Christ has made upon it.

We have spoken of the seeming obscurity and vagueness, the aspect of uncertainty which the things of faith seem to wear and which a reverent heart feels as he looks toward God. What we have just said explains this fact.

When we open our eyes on the physical world about us, all of it seems pretty clear and definite—we know how to walk and work and get around. True, we make mistakes now and then, we misunderstand and misread directions sometimes, but generally speaking the material world about us is clear.

But when we look within, we "see through a glass darkly," when we pray, or believe or worship, our faculties are dull and unequal to the demands upon them, and things seem obscure and we grow weary, impatient and often lose heart, and give it all up. How deeply we need "Openness toward God."

The reason of this is that God is a spiritual Presence, and must be received as such. He is mind, divine mind, and must be met and known as mind knows mind. Yet Paul was talking of a very simple and practical thing and when he said, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," he gave us a very practical method of living, and we must realise that it means that our minds are our life. It was a tremendous saying of Tennyson's:

*"Think well! Do well will follow thought
And in the fatal sequence of the world
An evil thought may spoil the children's blood."*

Let us put this in several useful statements:

1. Try to think as Jesus thought. We know quite clearly what Jesus thought about every essential thing, we know it more clearly than we do almost anything else—what He thought about God and life and people, the way we should speak and act and conduct our lives.

So true is this that what He thought and said about these considerations has been accepted as

final and ultimate by all men to-day. Even among those who do not obey Him, this at least is accepted as true. He tried to get people to think as God thought—"If God so clothe the grass of the field which to-day is and to-morrow is cast unto the oven, will he not much more clothe you?" So He passed on down the roadway of the few short years He had to live and touched one man after another, the rich and poor, the cultured and the plain, and He is doing it still to-day.

One simple fact stands out above all else in His thinking, namely, He placed God first. They thought of life first and He thought of God. They thought life belonged to them, He knew and saw that it belonged to God.

One word, one comprehensive word, gathers up all His thinking, and that is renunciation. He renounced, pushed to one side his privileges and joys and sought the help and good of others. He renounced all and showed that all life would be more beautiful and happier, that health and progress would be greater and better if men would try to think and live first for others.

He was crucified. Of course He was. That was inevitable, since the world disagreed with Him and was annoyed and disturbed by Him and wanted Him out of the way. Yet the world of to-day, while it does not imitate Him, agrees that He was right, and one-half of it uncovers its head

on Good Friday to the rightness of the mind that first dared to think this way.

The cross was the symbol of His life and truth and teaching, and that cross symbolises, bodies forth all of His thinking. When confronted by any problem, any issue whatever, try to think unselfishly, lovingly, renounce your own conceits, your own advantages, try to think in His terms of the cross about it and you will get somewhere with it. Put the cross into what you think.

Never before did any of the world's supreme teachers do anything as daring as that. Never did any one venture to put two pieces of wood together, cross them, and say, "That is what my life means, that is how you should think and live."

Let us make this matter of having the mind of Christ very plain to ourselves. Something is deeply and painfully lacking in the way we think and live in our church life to-day. We lack happiness, and peace and insight into the vital meaning of things. It may be made very different.

The moment you become awakened to the fact that your mind is surrounded by the mind of God, that it besets you and besieges you behind and before, enclosing it like light encloses the body, then the power of that Mind flows into yours, permeates it, clarifies and strengthens it. It will give you release, enlargement and freedom. You become a changed man. Think this, say this and feel this.

Make it a living reality. Happiness, peace and understanding will come to you.

This is what the Holy Communion is meant to do for you and declare to you. It represents what God is always doing for you—bestowing His very Life into the stream of your life, adding something to your very spiritual being.

2. Let us remember that happiness is given us of God and that if we want it and ask it He will give us such happiness as we sincerely desire. Happiness depends upon a condition of mind.

Unless we have happiness, nothing else matters. People will not want what we have if we are miserable. Many will see that we are centrally wrong. Be sure that, amid the pains and losses and havoc of life, God will keep you, and you will be happy. His happiness defies all obstacles and all conditions. It comes in spite of all things to the contrary.

Far above all else in the world of Jesus' mind was His happiness and His ability to bestow it, share it with others. Ask Him, go to Him for it. You can as literally get it from Him by humble and believing request as you can get the apple from the tree.

3. Seek Jesus' quietness of mind. No one can study the discourses and parables and comments of Jesus and not feel the serenity of His thought.

He gives you the impression which in some degree is felt when you are on a mountain top and

view, far and wide, the great sweeps and stretches of land below. It is rough and uninteresting in places, but looked at from above it all seems fair and lovely. So when your mind is lifted up and you succeed in thinking of life's rough things, somewhat as He did, then the unsightly becomes interesting, and the small thing is merged in the larger place.

No man to-day can retain mental calm and poise unless he too strives to look at life and trouble and work by first getting apart, somewhat apart with God. You can do this only through prayer.

No one can tell from what heights and depths of personal background this quietness of mind came. But in some way it seemed to have been an outlook gained through prayer. It can only come in this way. Never imagine that you do not have time for prayer. The opposite is true—you do not have time not to pray.

Let your mind be guided of God, submit its processes, theories and plans to Him, ask Him to help you think aright and your mind will then be kept quiet, at rest and at peace.

Look at the bird swinging in the wind in her nest in the tree, so frail, so exposed and imperilled. Yet she does not seem disturbed and in fact need not be, for nest and bird are both secure and her little family will be unharmed. All because it is fastened firmly and dexterously to the limb of the

greater life of the tree. So when we do our thinking, ponder, wonder and analyse, let us try to realise that our life is after all attached far more wonderfully than we think to the greater life of the tree of God's life.

4 Seek Jesus' insight of mind. This was one of the marvellous qualities of Jesus which made Him stand out supremely above all others and helps to account for the mighty following He has drawn after Him. He saw through life into God and saw through God into life and moved out upon life from God.

Jesus always perceived, understood and read things aright, nothing puzzled or confused Him, nothing was enigma but the perversity and obtuseness of men's hearts. He utterly amazed people by his swift flashes of insight, by His darting and penetrating words that struck and smote their way home.

How wistful and sadly surprised sound such words of His as, "How is it that ye do not understand?" He might have said, "Why can't you see it?" To Philip on one occasion He said, "Have I been so long a time with you and hast thou not known me?" And when He looked upon Jerusalem He wept and exclaimed with a grief that has wrung the heart of the ages since, "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children as a hen doth gather her

chickens under her wings and ye would not"—a lament that they did not see, did not understand. This fact of our mental blindness must lie at the very centre of the grief of God.

Men can see things, culture can catalogue and read facts, but only God can enable us to see what facts mean in His sight and the value they have to Him. Education can inform you, but only religion can enlighten you.

Moreover, it is the mind that is happy and quiet before God that will understand and see. Mutual happiness and calmness always sharpen perception and make for mental clearness. One reason why there is so little clear thinking to-day is because there is so much mental unhappiness and disquietude. People must get the right outlook upon things—their problems, questions and troubles—and then they will grasp a complex situation better.

These are the areas of the mind to which Jesus ministered, which He touched and penetrated with mystic beauty in a quieting and enriching way. His was a mind that possessed and knew happiness, quietness and insight, and He can lead us to these same sources of supply with which He was in perpetual contact.

Let us try to be happy in God, quiet in God and before God, bring our minds to a happy rest in Him and then have that satisfying insight into so many things that otherwise are obscure to-day.

Multitudes of church people simply do not

know any such experience, they are strangers to it, and suffer all the painful consequences of its neglect. They go on being miserable in their thoughts, hopeless, irritable, confused and condemnatory, continuing to live in mental fury and fear, their whole thought-world boiling and swirling all day and every day, and themselves captious, critical and bitter toward every cause.

Nothing is so tragic and apparently contradictory as this strange interest in education of a sort and, along with it, this still stranger mental unhappiness and defeat to which good people surrender. They become informed, but bitter. They grow learned, but hopeless. They grow cultured, but lose their love and peace and joy. But to know and possess happiness and quietness and gracious understanding, they must know Jesus, the greatest Friend and Teacher of the Mind that the mind has ever had.

It is one of the cutting sayings of G. K. Chesterton that the world seems to have developed a wonderful system of world communication, namely, the radio, at a time when nobody has anything to say that is worth saying.

All this explains in part why there is so much neurasthenia, indigestion, sleeplessness, neuritis and high blood-pressure to-day. It also accounts in some degree for the large number of suicides that we have. The mind vastly affects the health of the body. Every thought we have telegraphs

its subtle influence over the fine wires of the nervous system and directly affects tissues and cells and functions. Health itself is at stake. This fever of the spirit, this burning, fiery restlessness of thought, flaming and consuming our peace and destroying poise and calm and joy, is a terrible and ruinous influence. Realising how many give way to it and how few support with any leadership that seeks its relief, one is not surprised that so many people are ill. It is a wonder that there are not more.

Many a sick man to-day would do much to recover his health if he were to make it his business to cultivate something of the happiness of thought, calmness of mind and the God-given insight into life which only Christ can bestow. He would emerge from it, be lifted above it, like the mountain top that lifts its head above the fogs of the valleys below.

We were talking not long since with a busy professional man of large practice, cultivated, able and well known, and also, incidentally, having a heavy domestic burden to bear, but who had become careless about church attendance. He had discontinued it almost altogether. We asked him why he had become so infrequent a worshipper when worship might have brought him so much help.

He said that making a living had become such a hard grind and drive that when Sunday came he was so nervous he found it hard to sit still and

concentrate his thoughts and he did not feel fit to come.

What was the matter with this man? His whole thought of God and prayer and worship was wrong. The whole matter of going to church had come to be just one more thing to be done, another sermon to be heard, some more poor music to be endured, in short, just one more worry.

But how infinitely mistaken he was. In fact, he was doing all he could to make unbearable a load that was already heavy and turning a help into a hindrance, and mistaking a friend for a foe. He needed to have some one show him that once he opened his mind to God, gave God a chance at his mind, once he lifted up heart and thought to the beauty and peace of God, that his whole life would be relieved, enlarged, softened, brightened and inspired.

Even among men of the world we can see the transcendent influence of one mind, thus inspired, over a multitude in chaos. Not long ago, at a certain large political gathering, when all was confusion and no clear issue was seen by any one, a certain calm and clear-thinking man arose and in a few moments untangled the confused situation of to-day and held it up for better understanding to the light of the past. In a short, lucid and charming statement, set into beautiful and terse English, he captured the attention, cleared the air and relieved a discordant situation.

How did it happen? A few years ago he withdrew from the heat of conflict and the confusions of the street and became thoroughly informed as to the meaning of the immense and confused streams of ideals and theories in America. He became happy in mind, calm and quietly informed, and then he saw and understood clearly. It will always be so.

It is true that you may get and keep the mind of Christ. It can be done. Do not imagine that it is impossible. Do not be discouraged. If at first you do not seem to get very far, get as far as you can. You will improve. Keep the main points clear. Bear these things in mind.

Realise that something is sadly the matter with most of us and that it can be corrected. That people all around you are sad and disquieted and dull of insight, that they are not keenly interested in spiritual things. No doubt you are the same. Do not be content with being like them. Do not drift. Look to Christ and notice that He alone of all men seems to be in possession of this mental health and power you need. Go to Him for your help. Make a definite act of it.

In this act of approach to Him, note three steps to be taken:

1. Give attention to Him—concentrate.
2. Become interested, pray until your interest is awakened.

3. Surrender the mind to Him—let Him get possession of your mind.

Remember the wonderful help that the service of the Holy Communion, the Eucharist, can give you. It has done more for the happiness, the calming, the quieting of the mind, than almost any other service, or human composition. All through it the mind and its peace, confidence and illumination are wonderfully treated.

XII

OUR HIDDEN SPRINGS OF LIFE

ALL life comes from God, whether it is the life of the mind, the soul or the body. Bodily health is simply life at the normal. It is that condition of inward harmony and unity of physical functions and organs co-operating and supplied in right proportions with food, air and exercise, which replace destroyed tissue and cell.

The life of the soul is nourished in somewhat the same way. Progress and failure in the health of the body help us to understand growth or decline in the health of the soul. There is a likeness between them.

This life of soul and mind, this life of all conscious life, is one that likewise must be fed, sustained and strengthened. It must grow, or else it must decline. This life, as truly as that of the body, can become tired, weak, run-down and also it may even decline and fail. We must not forget that. It can be vitiated with poisons, it can be made to lose its buoyancy, its elation and fulness of power.

It is this higher life, that lies back of all conscious life, therefore, which weaves and creates and

conditions our lower life. Material substances from the outside are put within its reach for its use, but the power that makes and remakes, the force and intelligence that weaves and replaces, lies back there in the body of this higher life of which we speak. It is quite true that scientific men may and do greatly help this work of the higher life in the remaking and replacing of the life that is lower, but what they actually do is to *let this body of life be set free*, in order that it may do its work. They release it, take away the things which hinder it, or, as they themselves say, "We assist nature." But what they do and all that they do is to help and, furthermore, their help must be free from mistake.

But while the scientist cannot create or increase this higher life, there is an Unseen Power that can and does. That Power is God. So then the supply of food or life for this higher life, which is back of all else, is the life and presence of God. God directly sustains and keeps alive, through all the years of earthly life, this mysterious and beautiful life, out of which all lower life comes. Its source, therefore, is God—the life of the mind, the life of life. That is why Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." By which He meant that He was to lead the human race to its source of supply for this deeper life within us. He declared that there is a source of all such life lying within us, within our reach and available to our use, and then He

added that He was its interpreter and its satisfaction. No one has ever found that He was mistaken.

But we must also add that in a lesser way, this beautiful, higher life is also helped or injured by human contact, as well as divine. Men as well as God, or let us rather say, God, through men, indirectly strengthens this life, releases it for larger action and greater results. This they do by their love, hope, faith and joy. But God is the soul's chief supply—God, who comes to the soul as spiritual life and comes to the mind as wisdom.

Just as physical health may be weakened or crippled by allowing infection to enter the stream of physical life through bad food, air or water, so too there are spiritual poisons which may enter the great spiritual life stream flowing from God, flowing through the soul and seeming to rise far back in that infinite and unseen hinterland of the soul, far out of sight, but contributing to all that we are and do. Your outlook upon life, the way you think, the standards you erect and the spirit which dominates your life, may injure or it may produce the opposite. This is an awful thought, but it has tremendous and inspiring aspects.

It ought to arouse every one to examine himself carefully, and especially when the crises of life arise, to look well within the deeper places in order that he may be sure that he is "keeping himself in the love of God." How frequently Jesus re-

mind His followers, and still reminds them to-day, to "Watch ye!" How sternly St. Paul caught up that word of alarm and passed it on down the centuries: "Stir up the gift," "Examine yourselves," "See that ye abound more and more."

Now, it is clear that when some calamity occurs in this visible house in which we live, which hurts it so that it is like a derailed engine, or a broken limb, it means that in some way this physical life has either been subjected to uses that are wrong, or else we have, in the course of doing God's will, been obliged to hurt the lower life in the service of the higher. Every wounded soldier has had to subject his body to this experience. Every man in the toil of the day's work, and every faithful mother, trying to make a home, may find it necessary to wear their bodies out in behalf of the soul, and its need. But whatever the crisis, we ought to look upon all sorrow and sickness and trouble—such as the loss of health, problems arising at home, and failures or difficulties in business, or what not—as times of invoice and inward accounting and personal survey. They should be such times as ought to bring us back into the light of God for re-examination.

For the moment, however, let us disregard all injuries to health that may come through sin and wrong, and think only of the harm that comes through ignorance, wrong living, sorrows great or small, broken homes, and those tragedies due to

the merciless drive of American business. Let us think only of these. All of these contacts may play havoc with health, and often do break us down, not because of sin or conscious wrong-doing, but through duty, sorrow and service, and take their toll in life and strength.

We believe there are thousands to-day in our hospitals who are victims of life as it lays its rough hand tragically upon them. Yet we also believe that they may recover if they patiently learn the secret of life's hidden springs, for what others have done, they also can do.

We may not be conscious of these little springs of defeating and poisoning forces which pour in their evil flood on the beautiful, delicate surfaces of the soul, but, nevertheless, they do their ruinous work all the same. Whether we are aware of their presence or not, they cut away, like a thief in the night, at the king's jewel chest where we keep our priceless jewels of joy and peace.

If, therefore, you are ailing, ill, or greatly troubled, so that even the sun may seem to be eclipsed, you ought to realise that not only is there something wrong, but that something is wrong which may be set right, for remember, if you are sick, you ought to get well; if you are sad, you ought to get happy; if you are overwhelmed with troubles, you ought to get deliverance—you ought and you can.

In the case of our physical bodies, we know too

well that some invading germ or germs may enter and make us ill, and also we know that we need some wise physician's help. But we should just as truly realise that this is not the whole of the truth, and that the entire field is not within the reach of any physician's gaze or skill. Only the field of the physical body is within the reach of the physician, and even large areas of that are beyond his touch and sight. Let us not fail to realise that whatever a physician may do, that it is truly the help of God coming to us, if it be wisely and rightly planned and applied. But it is not all that God can do, either for the economical life without, or the physical health within.

There are invisible forces and foes, vicious and harmful contacts that weaken the mind, darken the hope and undermine trust. They may turn loose chaos in the house of the soul. If this happens, the body directly suffers, and every experience testifies it.

St. Paul referred to this deeper influence as the "hidden man of the heart." Again he spoke of it as, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Let us all, therefore, be thoroughly aroused to the nature and number of some of these invisible influences which poison mind and soul and lower our general spiritual well-being.

1. Fear is one of these, and there are many kinds of fear. They generally do their work unconsciously and at least for a long time are not

discovered by us. But when they are found out, it is surprising how easily they may be overcome. We generally, however, are *too proud* to admit that we fear; we think that there is something lacking in courage about it, something of which we should be ashamed. So it comes about that underneath or behind this cover of pride, fears get in their work and destroy the body's balance and fabric.

We advise that you hunt them down, show them no quarter. The whole brood of them are thieves and robbers of the body's health and happiness—anxieties, alarms, forebodings, apprehensions, their name is legion. And the legion is a bad one. They seem to come into the soul from in front. It will help you to remember that. The soul is obliged, as a good pilot, to look ahead, to peer through the fogs and mists in front of it, to think ahead and as it does, it comes upon issues, problems and situations which are difficult and confusing, and at once it is apt to become agitated and feverish, and lose its poise and confidence. Pretty soon "worry" begins, for it is just at this point that all worry arises. And let us remind you that when worry does enter into your life, then you have real trouble indeed. For all worry is just so much dust in the eyes, grit in the teeth and sand in the machinery—you cannot see, you cannot eat, you cannot run the machinery of life. But there's a way out. There's a cure.

2. Notice, in connection with all fears, that the

mind seems to have three fields of action, it seems to look in three various directions, there is an arrangement in the mind which may be suggestively referred to as an outlook with three windows. If you notice this, it will relieve you and at times wonderfully compose a confused situation. For it will enable you to locate just from what source your trouble and agitation is coming. All of which conditions you know to be saddening your heart, upsetting your nervous balance and injuring your health, and maybe, disturbing your whole home. We said the mind looks in three directions. So it does, it must do this. As it does, fears arise. In fact, they are certain to arise in every one. It isn't the fact that fears arise in you. That is normal. But it is that you do not know what to do with them after they arise. They spring up within every one, but some of us have learned how to put them out of the door. You also must learn what to do with them.

Therefore, when one man says he never has any fears, it does not mean anything, because, as a matter of fact, he has. The kind of fears he has may be different from the ones of which he is conscious, but they are there. And it may be worse for us if we are unconscious of fears than if we are conscious of them. Whether conscious or not, they can make one sick, defeat the physician's work, nullify the influence of medicine and make life sorrowful and ineffectual. Learn what to do

with them and know that they spring from the soul's outlook upon the future.

Then the soul has contact with the *present*—present work, life and daily responsibilities. It is right that such contact be maintained. It must not be neglected, ignored or forgotten. But this daily contact can generate terrible influences which injure the soul, darken the mind and directly affect the health of the body. If you deny that you have any such influences within you, you are living in a fool's paradise. They exist in spite of your denial. But if, on the other hand, you do not know what to do about them, you will just as certainly be troubled. You must not ignore them in any foolish way, nor despair once you have discovered them. There's a way—there's a cure.

These contacts produce irritations, antagonisms, the sense of defeat, a feeling of excitement and agitation. Things do not seem to go right in the office, or in the home. Everything and everybody apparently is out of sorts. People seem queer or positively disagreeable, and everywhere life seems to disappoint you. These things must be met and rightly understood, and they can be.

Then there is the mind's outlook on the past, which brings its influence to bear upon us through memory. Your memories may be a great delight to you, or they may whip you with a terrible whiplash. Remember that. Many persons are almost ill to-day because they permit their thoughts to

revolve in a vicious circle of regret, and they say it over and over and over again. We do not say you ought not to regret. But after your regret, turn it over to God and forget it. Some people recall what has happened many years ago and what they have done a long time since, and often remorse begins its evil ferment in the backgrounds of the mind. There is nothing religious or even creditable in a man becoming the victim of endless, fruitless, barren regrets. Again we say, there is a way out.

Co-operate, of course, with your physician, but remember that no physician has any instrument with which to read what is going on in this deeper life, in this buried world of soul and mind. Yet, strange to say, all the while this buried life is either enabling the physician to succeed, or determining his failure. What takes place in that hidden world of you will also determine whether or not your physical body may recover and you be happy and your life one of joy and usefulness.

3. Never let yourself continue to be worried, alarmed or troubled, as you face your future; never permit yourself to remain irritated in any contact in the *present*; never dwell upon the past endlessly and count over, in a futile way, your actual or supposed mistakes. There are some people that turn to their past and dwell upon these mistakes, luxuriating in them. They seem to wallow in them, as if they were a bed of roses. St.

Paul spoke very sternly about this matter and said, "Forget the things that are behind." That is the right thing to say about them—forget about them! Or as we say, "forget it." But in spite of all this, there are some who forever return to these failures and allow themselves to become moody, grouchy, sullen, so that when you meet them they look as if they had been submerged in a kind of black bath and came up dripping.

Let us try to learn the art of leaving the future with God. Let us say quite positively to ourselves, something like this—"I realise that that problem or situation which I must meet to-morrow does look bad. But I also know, because I know God, that when it comes up for settlement to-morrow, that God will certainly enable me to find the solution." Say just that, or something like it. Say it believably. For it is, every word of it, true.

Turn likewise to your present disagreeable contacts, whatever they are. Turn, for illustration, to some predicament that you are in at home, or in business, your sorrows, or quite possibly death may have taken from you some one dearer than life itself. Take up the question of the disagreeable things in daily business. Take up the past, and its regrets and blunders, and the sting which those regrets give to your pride. Take all of these things and fold them up together, into one, for really they resolve themselves into one. What do

they signify? They mean simply this—that life has proved too much for you, that at some point and in some respect, life has broken you down. So, in consequence, you are fearful, as you look toward the future, angry as you look toward the present, and bitter when you look toward the past. There you are. There are your three worlds. There is the whole of you. That is what is the matter with you, and that is the way to get out of it—your future, present and past.

Commit it all to God! We do not say to you not to *think* about the future, but do not worry about the future. For remember, when you begin to worry about a thing, you stop effectively thinking about it. We do not say never oppose any one in life because he irritates you, for that would be foolish. But we do say that when you meet humanity in the daily rush and push of life, try to realise that in all of your contacts, God is speaking through you. For, as a matter of fact, He is. Simply make the interview to be His. You think and speak with all the intelligence and courtesy that you can, but back of it all, bear in mind that what you are saying comes from God.

If you try to do this in ever so simple a way, we predict that you will never lose your temper or have more than a passing moment of irritation with anybody. Your mind will be living above it, on another plane, but you will be standing on that lower plane. It will be so because you will be a

messenger of what is truth and right, and you will not be a policeman, to hit somebody over the head if they may be wrong. We might say the same thing with regard to your memories, or those influences that come to you through memory out of the past. Concerning them, we ask you to dismiss them to God. What is gone is gone, and cannot be recalled. They are with God. Turn them over to Him and stop worrying about them.

If you say that all of this is hard to do, let us remind you of this. If you persist in carrying all of your apprehensions as to the future, all of your oppositions in the present, and all of your regrets out of your past,—if you continue to absorb all of this poison and debris; if you persist in living upon all of this bitter bread, you will almost certainly become sick at heart, troubled in mind, confused and moody and depressed in spirit. It does not take much thinking for you to realise further that this is certain to affect your body.

When once all of this has become set and fixed within you, you are a good candidate for the hospital. It is out of such conditions that insomnia may come, neurasthenia, high blood-pressure, stomach ulcers due to indigestion, and all such terrible kindred disorders. What an awful list it is anyhow! If by some chance you have already developed a special weakness in your body, this mode of life is certain to find out that weak link and maybe break it in two.

If we may use a figure of speech taken from our modern mechanical age, we would say that every man ought to have and use some kind of "spiritual shock absorber." It can be done. The presence of Jesus within the heart's dear precincts will take care of all these painful, distressing conditions which arise, first in the world of the soul and later emerge in the body. But if they are to be eradicated, they ought to be sought in those infinite fields of the soul, and only God can help you do that.

We believe that there is such a thing as a "bruised personality," as some one has said. A personality so hurt by the injustices of the world, so bitterly sorrowful over some death which has occurred, so depressed by successive defeats that apparently the very life's stuff of the soul seems to be wounded and deeply smitten. It may produce serious or even permanent physical effects.

But the beautiful thing in it all is that God seems to let down into us wonderful streams of help and life and peace. When we sicken and sadden ourselves with worry, hate, irritation and alarm, we simply weaken these beautiful streams of God's help, we poison or defeat them, so that while God presses upon us His aid, we are not able to reach out our hands and appropriate it.

So our bodies remain ill, our lives remain sad. They lack outward personal charm, and we seem to be grouchy, forbidding and morose. Medicine

seems to fail to help us, and the physician tries in vain to make us better. A visit to the seashore, the mountains and the lakes fails to do us permanent good. At last we survey the whole field of our life and think it strange that nothing seems to be happening. But really it isn't strange at all, it is quite simple.

Each of us must learn the beautiful spiritual art of making a bundle of all fears, defeats, negations, impossibilities, disagreeables, antagonisms, disappointments, moods and grouches, and put them into the hands of that dear and infinite Friend, the good Physician, the greatest of all Masters, and simply beseech Him to carry them away. The amazing thing is that He will absolutely do it. What in the world He does with all of this world's debris and poison and failure, it would be more than hard to say. But He does something with it all, that is certain. We just cannot tell. We only know that it disappears and that the patient gets well.

In this way you will keep pure and sweet and clean the great spiritual life stream within you, the source of your happiness and health and the secret of your real charm.

Then also that deeper door within, which swings on double hinges (so the mystics say), inward toward God and outward toward the world, will open into your life all that fulness of power which comes to the aid of the sick body, giving it strength, and to the smitten mind, giving it calmness and

quiet, and to the wearied life, giving it rest. When you do this, you will find yourself in a new world. You will.

This is our hidden spring of life. How wonderful the words of the psalmist are in that connection: "All my fresh springs are in thee."

But how much more wonderful are the words of Jesus, as they fall upon the ears of a world whose heart is sick and whose body is deeply smitten:

"I will be in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life."

Are we using our hidden springs? Let us do so.

XIII

HOW TO USE THE SILENCE

ALL of us to-day stand in need of at least three things, three personal assets: *Peace, insight and health.* Putting it differently, let us say, a quiet mind, knowledge of what to do, and bodily strength with which to do it. Silence unto God is the way.

If you do not have these things you will not get anywhere with anything. They are not substitutes for service and action, but necessities of all service. Without them, action becomes barren. Yet there are but few quiet minds to-day; poor health widely prevails, and sanity and insight in conduct are not abundant.

Learning how to become silent unto God, honestly facing your life, your world, doing it quietly, repentantly, listening to God, and trying to *feel* what He presses upon you—this will alter everything in your life. Our poverty and bewilderment and despair are due to our unwillingness to work at this task. But how?

Take time, make time. That goes without saying. Pay the price of effort. You are likely to get what you want if you want it intensely enough. Then, be brief and simple. Take about twenty

minutes for this act of devotion at the first, and then increase it a little.

Then remember that silence is not praying, not petition, not asking, but it is thinking—thinking but not talking, and yet not revery, or vacancy. Positively and constructively it is this:

1. An honest, humble, fearless facing of your facts—your troubles, sickness, needs, desires, problems and disappointments, whatever they may be. Thinking them out before the marvellous and beautiful Presence of God, your Very Best Friend. Do not worry yourself in your “thinking,” keep it away from worry and moroseness. Do just the opposite, lift it to Him and leave it there, then you will not worry. Worry is a sign that you have not given it over into God’s hands.

2. Then let your thoughts take some such path as this—think this: “In the Presence of my God, I now dismiss from mind and heart what darkens and pains and disappoints me, and I lay my life before Thee, my dear Father and Friend. I lay before Thee my disquieted mind, my unhappy life, my tempted heart, my struggle for health, and ask Thee to help me think of my life as Thou dost think of it, and see it as Thou dost see it, and then I shall think victoriously and gladly and Thy power will flow through me and Thy will prevail.” Think this, but do not say it—let your silence begin with thinking and let your “thinking” move along some such path.

3. Lastly, take this step: Try to let your *thoughts* pass on from an active and earnest process of thinking like this, to an attitude of mind that does not actively think, but which stops all earnest thinking and tries to *listen*, be attentive, mentally still. There is a silence of the mind.

Give over the inside world to God, make your mind to "quit" on the inside, make a holy hush to prevail. Keep at it, you can do it. Put it in so many words if necessary. Say this: "Hush, my mind and heart and soul before God. Hush! Peace! And be still!" Do that.

It is when you thus lay bare in silence the deep and sacred places of the inner world unto the living touch of the fingers of God who made you, that mysterious doors seem to open in to the Presence Eternal. Power for your healing and guidance seems to come forth and bless you. Standing there you recognise the truth and infinite sweep of Jesus' wonderful words, "The Kingdom of God is within you," for it is a kingdom, vast, imperial and splendid.

No one can do this for you. No one can tell you just what to do in so many words. You must not and cannot imitate nor mechanically repeat. Yet, what we have just suggested may urge you to a living effort.

Do not think this high-flown and impossible. The opposite is true. Life will grow terribly hard if you do not do it, for life may take from you

your sense of God. We are rapidly moving to a showdown to-day—the world is going to take away from many what religion they have, or else push them to the point of getting more—all for God, or else nothing for God. May God speed that day.

Silence unto God enables you to find God, feel Him, realise Him, and enables Him to find you. The heart of life is God, the heart of prayer is “silence.” No silence, no prayer; no prayer, no sense of God.

One day you will have nothing but God, but having Him you will have all. Silence now brings you within the reach of Him and brings Him within the reach of you, “*Solus cum solo*”—“The Alone with the alone.”

XIV

SACRAMENT, TRYST AND PEACE

THE scene in that upper room long ago will ever remain unequalled and alone among human incidents and events, for its amazing pathos and wonder and beauty. Human eyes have turned to it in tireless interest and endless delight and hungry hearts and broken lives, for two millenniums, have pressed forward to it for strength and healing and peace, and none has ever gone to it in vain.

"In the same night in which he was betrayed . . . this is my body, this is my blood . . . this do in remembrance of me . . . and here we offer ourselves, our souls and bodies," so run the ancient words, singing and chanting into our hearts their lovely, mystic meaning.

Each time we kneel at the altar, the far-away scene comes refreshingly back to us: The bare room, the crude table, the lone Figure in the midst, the frenzied crowd outside soon to demand His blood, then from His lips falls the simple request, "This do," daring, calm and sure; and it has been obeyed the centuries through and the wide world over as no command has ever been obeyed.

Then the long trail of human observance since is more amazing still. Think of the empires and kingdoms that have risen and fallen, the languages and tongues now dead that were living then, the physical world itself that has been transformed since, so that a dweller in Jerusalem would not know it to-day.

Yet, through it all, this thing has remained essentially the same, those mysterious words, that strange foregathering of all believing people goes on year after year in all lands and draws to it more human hearts and human feet than any other earthly thing. After all, there is something in that fine line in *The King's Henchman*, by Edna St. Vincent Millay:

"The Church is no candle. Blow on!"

It has weathered more storms and faced more foes within the fold than it has without. It has withstood the rage and clash and shock of fierce opposing views and warlike difference as to meaning, and still it goes on falling like sweet dew on the world's hot life.

Something is in it, some Principle, Power or Presence which has given it proof against storm and folly and hate and time. A thing so changeless in its effect and yet so changing in its presentation, so indestructible in the blessing and help it gives, must be endowed with a mysterious quality

to have persisted and endured and triumphed for two thousand years in this way.

How widely also is the range of various observances from time to time and land to land, and yet the human heart has felt as one as to the strong, sweet Gift it bestows. The Mass of a Roman cathedral, the Supper of a non-conformist chapel, the Holy Communion or Eucharist of an Anglican Church or an American Episcopal Church, and both using the Prayer Book—all are different, and yet all try to do one thing, to lift the human to the Divine by unveiling the Divine for human need and use and so refresh the soul by merging our lives with God.

Nothing in the world could have travelled so far, or so deeply enshrined itself in our love had it not brought help to our human need, food and water to our hunger and thirst. It has. You may rest assured that no one can dupe the whole race for twenty centuries thus.

It has brought to human hearts, over the most terrible of all roads, the road of life, the most priceless of all possessions; namely, peace.

It is too bad that strife has gathered about it, but remember that men never fight over something they do not love. Had there been no family devotion, there would have been no feuds and had there never been any deathless love of country, there would have been no traitor. Had this sacrament not involved all we hold dear, the peace of

the soul, no one would ever have cared intensely for its meaning.

This sacrament and supper is a God-arranged meeting place for the Father with His children, the infinite Lover with His human beloved one and in its sweet silence the infinite sufficiency of a loving Presence presses and pushes its way out within our reach and our weary, erring, bewildered lives take it up, renewed and refreshed, and life is at peace! The wounded soldier is made well and strong to fight again and the weary feet of the lost traveller are set once more on the way.

Trysting place, rendezvous, meeting place between two—a lovely Scotch word meaning “trust.” A place of renewed devotion, replighted faith, love throbbing its answer out to love again that receives and believes. Hush, calm, stillness and rest! The tryst of Jesus!

*“And Heaven comes down our souls to greet
And glory crowns the mercy seat.”*

All of us, it is hoped, have some place, some home or spot, whither we go now and then and stand face to face in kindly frankness and love, with some one very dear, ere we go out and turn back to a hard struggle and a vast enterprise. A place where we are understood, nothing to be explained, just a touch of the hand, a glance, a look and then we go. But our lives are purified, strengthened, sweetened because we have kept

tryst. It was just like Jesus to have arranged something like this for his storm-beaten and bewildered friends before He went into the vast fields of the infinite Beyond. The tryst of Jesus!

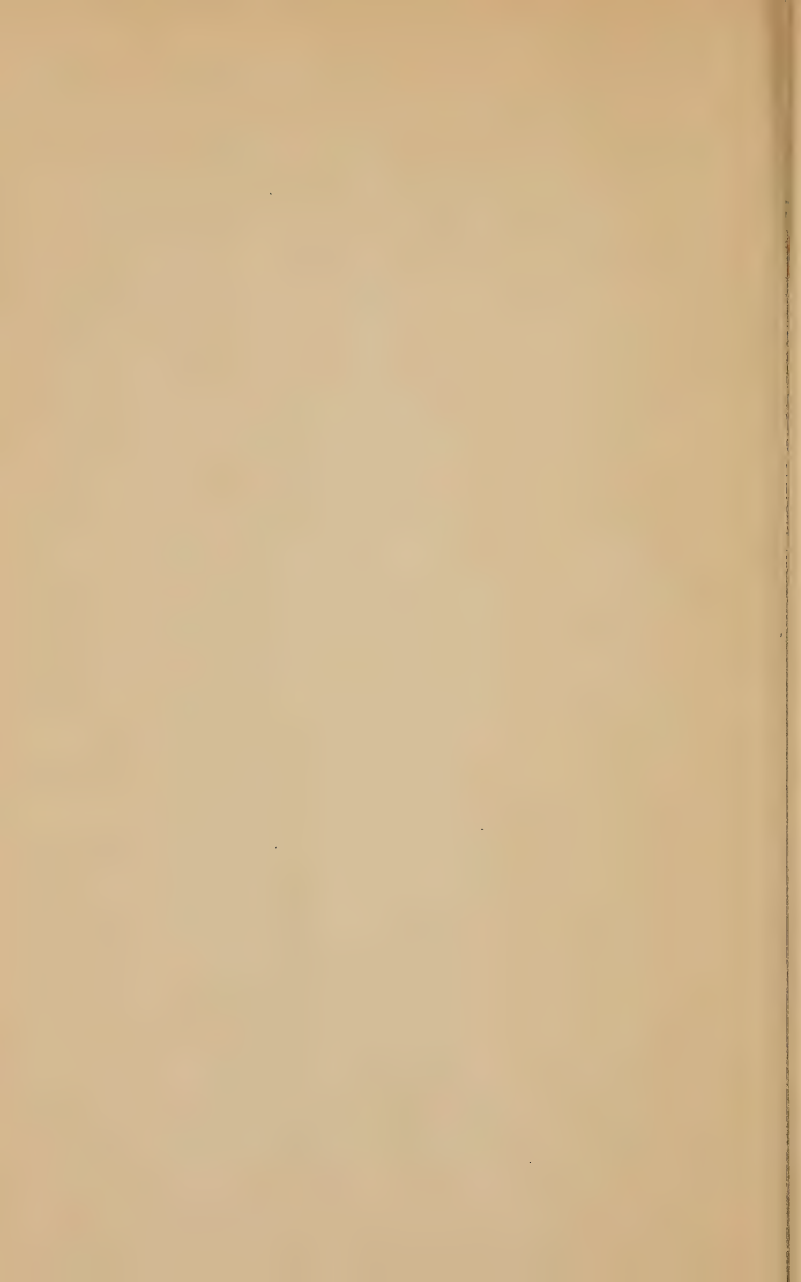
Some friends we meet and greet and pass, some we pause with and exchange views and move on, and with some we abide, linger with and to whom we return and keep tryst. They pour upon us a flood of sunlight and a warmth of radiance that falls like the light falls upon the lily and the rose and the grass and the trees.

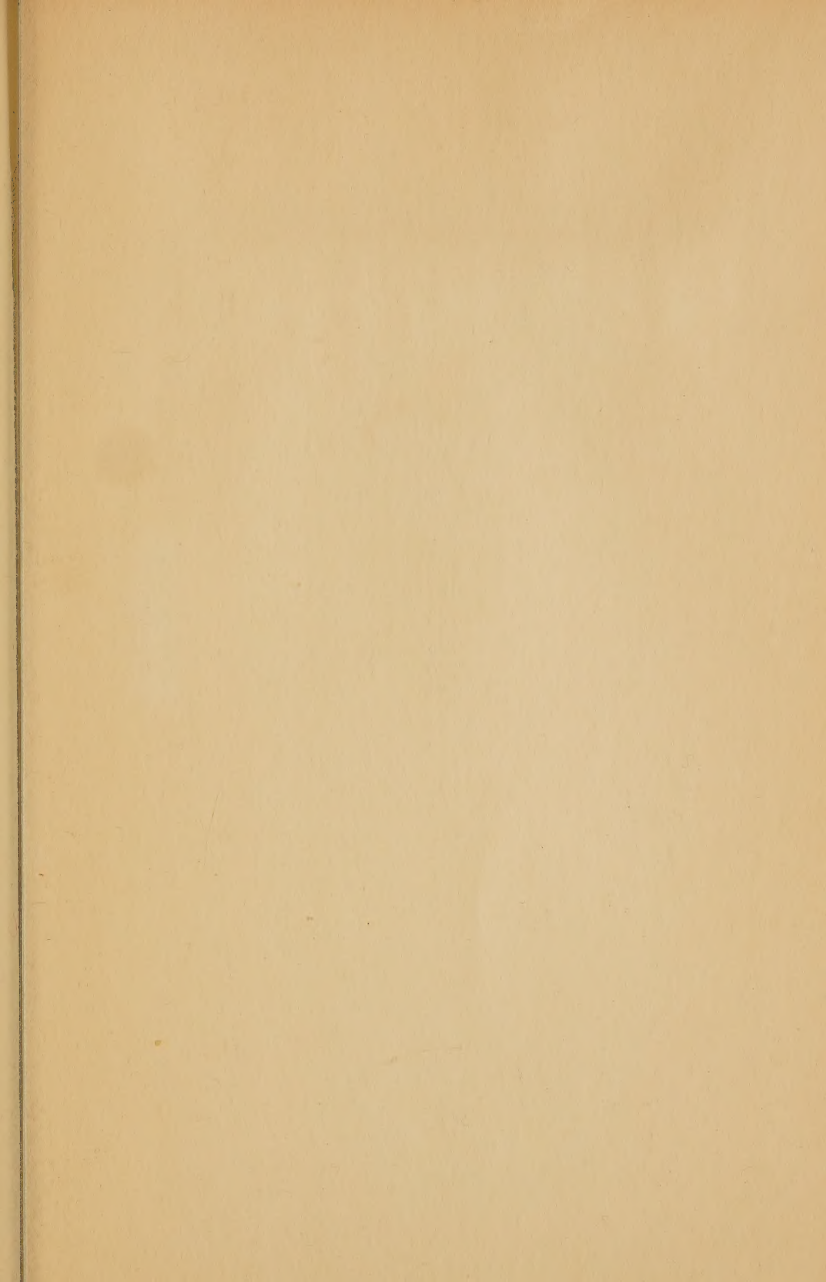
Thus comes peace. It only comes in this way. It is given, and never bought or happened upon. God gives it and therefore it is above all other things sacramental. Unless God mingles in the process it will not come. God only can make a sacrament and only God can make peace, and only sacrament can make tryst, and only the Lord's tryst can bestow peace.

Had earth never known the meaning of God's compassion in Christ, then earth would never have known peace. Quietness and calm it would have known, but not Jesus' peace, for you do not have to have anything or know any strange thing or excel in any strange earthly way. It depends upon God, defies all environment, rejoices in all difficulties, surmounts all barriers and comes to the heart hungry with life's hunger for peace.

The whole human drama is a struggle for peace. The mad rush for wealth and place is a following

of a false trail to peace, a false lure that leads to vain imitations of this lovely jewel. If you have it, you have all. If you have it not, you have nothing that abides. Sacrament! Tryst! Peace!





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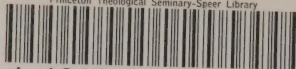
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